

ELLICOTTS BIBLE COMMENTARY.

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1343937

TER
ST. JOHN
ST. JUDE



5091

DISCARDED

JUN 20 '82



Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

La Verne College Library

La Verne College Library
La Verne. California

DISC 500
DEC 2 1962

☆ Private Library ☆

Of

MR. & MRS. F. A. B. Baber

THE
NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY.

ST. PETER, THE FIRST EPISTLE, with Commentary by the Rev. A. J. MASON, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Cambridge University, and Canon of Canterbury Cathedral. THE SECOND EPISTLE, with Commentary by the Rev. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.

ST. JOHN, with Commentary by the Ven. W. M. SINCLAIR, D.D., Archdeacon of London.

ST. JUDE, with Commentary by the Rev. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.

Bible N.T. Catholic Epistles. English 1

BS

2777

193

1903

THE EPISTLES OF

St. Peter

St. John and St. Jude

With Commentaries by the REV. A. J. MASON, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Cambridge University, and Canon of Canterbury Cathedral; by the REV. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.; and by the VEN. W. M. SINCLAIR, D.D., Archdeacon of London

EDITED BY CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D.

Lord Bishop of Gloucester

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED

LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE. MCMIII

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

I. PETER.

whom, though ye never saw Him, ye believe, and believing, ye rejoice;" "not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing;" and many other passages. St. Polycarp's friend Papias (according to Eusebius) made use of this Epistle too, and seems to have made special comments on the connection between St. Peter and St. Mark. Besides traces of the use of it to be found in Hermas, Theophilus, and others, it is freely quoted, and by name, by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and all subsequent writers. In fact, it would be difficult to imagine stronger external evidence in its favour. M. Renan, to take one example of an historical critic whose theology is not that of St. Peter, writes: "If, as we are happy to believe, this Epistle is really Peter's, it does honour to his good sense, his straightforwardness, and his simplicity;" and he gives many good reasons for his belief.

There is but one argument against the genuineness of the Epistle to which any weight at all can be assigned, and even this loses all its force when it is examined. "As for the eclectic and conciliatory tendencies observed in the Epistle of Peter," writes M. Renan (*Antéchrist*, p. ix.), "they constitute no objection to any but those who, like Christian Baur and his disciples, imagine the difference between Peter and Paul to have been one of absolute opposition. Had the hatred between the two parties of primitive Christianity been as profound as is thought by that school, the reconciliation would never have been made. Peter was not an obstinate Jew like James." Without necessarily agreeing in this description of James,

we may well accept the statement that St. Peter was a man peculiarly susceptible of impressions, and (even putting out of view the two Epistles in our canon) his admiration, and indeed his awe of St. Paul, are visible to any reader of the Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians. No writer recognises them more frankly than M. Renan (*Saint Paul*, pp. 85, 86). Now, on the one hand, it is very easy to exaggerate the Pauline character of this Epistle. It contains no one doctrine, such as Justification by Faith, which is essentially bound up with the name of St. Paul. On the matter of the free admission of Gentiles into the Church (which indirectly forms a large element in this Epistle) St. Peter had made up his mind long years before he came much under the influence of St. Paul (Acts x. 34; xi. 17; xv. 11). But on the other hand, there were special reasons why, in this Epistle, all St. Peter's sympathy for his co-Apostle should come out. He was using, either as his secretary, or as his letter-bearer—perhaps in both capacities—that liberal-minded Silas (chap. v. 12), who, after being chosen by the Church of Jerusalem as their own exponent to the Gentiles of Antioch, had attached himself to St. Paul, accompanied him in the most momentous of his missionary travels, and had (apparently) devoted himself to the edification and extension of those Asiatic churches which the two had founded together. St. Mark, too, dear to St. Peter as his own "son" in the faith (chap. v. 13), had been but recently again (after early misunderstandings) a chosen companion of St. Paul, and was probably not very long returned from a mission on which that

INTRODUCTION.

Apostle had despatched him into Asia Minor (Col. iv. 10). And, moreover, all St. Peter's chivalrous nature would be aroused by the manner in which the churches of all that region, or any rate the Jewish element in them, were beginning to revolt (as at Corinth also) against their founder when his back was turned.

II. The Place, Time, and Occasion of the Epistle.—

The place from which the letter was written was, we may say without any hesitation, Rome. If this be not the case, we must understand the "Babylon" of chap. v. 13 to mean the Eastern Babylon; and it is neither very probable in itself that St. Peter should have visited that city, and there have been met by St. Silas and St. Mark, nor is there any trace of a tradition, however meagre, that he ever travelled in those parts. On the other hand, were it not for the abuse made of the fact by the supporters of the Papacy, no one would ever have questioned the universal and well-authenticated tradition which affirms that St. Peter was, along with St. Paul, co-founder of the Church of Rome. The whole subject has been, of late years, sifted to the bottom by various German and other writers, especially by Dr. Hilgenfeld in repeated articles between 1872 and 1877 in his *Zeitschrift*. Though every conceivable difference may be found between these authors respecting the dates and duration of St. Peter's sojourn at Rome, very few are so hardily sceptical as to reject altogether evidence as strong, early, and wide, as that on which we believe that Hannibal invaded Italy. This fact being then certain,

the only question is whether Eusebius is right—or St. Clement of Alexandria, and even Papias, whom he appears to be quoting—in suggesting that "Babylon" in this Epistle meant Rome.*

About this there can be no difficulty. Not only is Rome so styled in the Apocalypse, and some few years later in the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*, but M. Renan quotes passages from various Rabbinical writings where the same name occurs with the same meaning. The Jews delighted in substituting symbolical names and epithets even in plain prose speech (*e.g.*, Jerubesheth for Jerub-baal, Haman the Agagite; St. Peter himself, if the Second Epistle be his, seems to do the same when he calls Balaam "the son of Bosor"); and the detestation of Rome, natural to a Jew at all times, and heightened by Christianity when once the persecution began, found vent for itself in all manner of names culled from the Old Testament, such as Nineveh and Edom, as well as Babylon.

If, then, Rome be the place from which St. Peter wrote, how can we find approximately the time? It cannot be put earlier than the year 64, for two reasons especially: (1) because it shows a deep acquaintance

* The words occur in a passage describing the origin of the Gospel of St. Mark, which ends thus, "and that [St. Peter] ratified the book for the churches to study (Clement, in the sixth of his *Hypotyposes*, has put the story in our hands, and his account is substantiated also by the Bishop of Hierapolis named Papias), and that Peter mentions Mark in his former Epistle, which also they say that he composed at Rome itself, and that he means this when he calls the city in a figurative kind of way 'Babylon,' in these words, *The co-elect one in Babylon greeteth you, and Mark my son.*"—(Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* II. xv. 2.)

I. PETER.

with the Epistle (so-named) to the Ephesians,* the date of which is 62 or 63; (2) because direct persecution had broken out against the Christians *as* Christians, and this did not take place until after the great fire at Rome in July, 64. The phenomena of the letter will not bear interpreting by the theory of simple disaffection, however deep and spiteful, of the populace against the Christians. They are liable at any moment, even away in Asia, to be called upon to give an account for their faith in the law courts (chap. iii. 15). If any of them is proved to be a Christian, he will very likely "suffer"—suffer capital punishment—for that crime (chap. iv. 16). The whole piece is burdened with persecution of a most systematic kind on every side. There is, however, one side-question which causes some difficulty. St. Paul is not mentioned as joining in

the salutation to the churches which he had founded. Why so? No more probable conjecture can be made than that, shortly after writing his Epistles to the Asiatic Churches, St. Paul was tried and liberated, and made that journey into the far West on which he had long set his heart, and which St. Clement of Rome, who must have known well, says that he took. By this journey he escaped death in the outbreak of Nero's persecution; and St. Peter, arriving at Rome about the same time, finds him gone, and Silas and Mark just coming back to headquarters from their work in Asia, with reports of division and disorder which required immediate attention. Accordingly St. Peter issues this circular letter which we have before us.

* Compare chap. i. 1, 2 with Eph. i. 4; chap. i. 3 with Eph. i. 3; chap. i. 4, 5 with Eph. i. 11, 18; chap. i. 12 with Eph. iii. 10; chap. i. 14 with Eph. ii. 2, 3; chap. ii. 5 with Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22; chap. ii. 18 with Eph. vi. 5; chap. iii. 1 with Eph. v. 22; chap. iii. 22 with Eph. i. 20, 21; chap. iv. 3 with Eph. ii. 2; and other passages. The connection with Silvanus, and with Mark, is sufficient to explain St. Peter's close familiarity with an Epistle which had been destined (largely) for the same readers as his own. His deep knowledge of the Epistle to the Romans (which is traceable in very many passages) is a strong argument in favour of the identification of "Babylon" with Rome. There are some indications also of an acquaintance with the Epistles to the Thessalonians, again perhaps through Silvanus. It is noteworthy, as showing the position which St. Peter held amidst conflicting parties, that the document which, next after the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, has most influenced this Letter, is the Epistle of St. James; for instance, compare chap. i. 6, 7 with Jas. i. 2, 3; chap. i. 24 with Jas. i. 10, 11; chap. iv. 8 with Jas. v. 20; chap. v. 5—9 with Jas. iv. 6—10; *et al*

Opinions are much divided as to whether the Letter was addressed primarily to Jewish or to Gentile Christians, or to both indifferently. Either answer is beset with difficulties, but the question will be found fully discussed in the Notes on the chief passages (chap. i. 1, 14, 17, 18; ii. 9, 10; iv. 3, *et al.*), in which it will be seen that the annotator adheres to the usually received opinion that St. Peter keeps to his original intention of going to the circumcision only. The pact between the Apostles was, indeed, not of that rigid nature which would preclude the possibility of his writing to the Gentiles, even as St. Paul wrote to Jews; still, it seems more natural on the whole to suppose that he adhered to the pact. The letter is throughout exactly what the author describes it as being (chap. v. 12). He "exhorts and testifies that this is God's true grace." That is, he insists upon the Jewish Christians recognising fully that St. Paul's

INTRODUCTION.

gospel was all that it ought to be (chap. i. 12, 25), and exhorts them to consequent unity and brotherly love. The presence of persecution both increases the temptation to fall away and also heightens the heinousness of such desertion, therefore every warning and every encouragement is pointed by the mention of sufferings and of the reward that is coming when Christ returns. The analysis of the Letter, which is

somewhat hard to make, may be seen in the marginal notes.

In the preparation of the Notes, the writer has not only had the usual printed commentaries and books of reference, but every now and then has had the advantage of manuscript notes of lectures (such as will scarcely be heard in Cambridge again) by the Bishop of Durham, lent to him by the Chancellor of Truro Cathedral.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I. —

Chap. i. 1, 2. The salutation.

(1) Peter, an apostle of Je-

A.D.
cir. 60.

^a Matt.
10. 2.
^b John

7. 35; Jas. 1. 1.

sus Christ,^a to the strangers scattered^b throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,

THE SALUTATION.—A comparison of this salutation with those of St. James, St. Jude, and St. John (Second and Third Epistles, and Rev. i. 4—6), will show that it is not distinctively a Pauline form of beginning a letter, but one common to all the early Christians. The same may be observed in the letters of the Apostolic Fathers. And the outburst of praise immediately following is likewise a usual type.

(1) **Peter, an apostle.**—The authoritative tone of this Epistle is shown at the outset. The writer assumes his full titles; not (as in the Second Epistle) his merely human name of Simeon, nor his humble capacity of “servant,” but the Rock-name which Christ had given him, and the official dignity of an “Apostle of Jesus Christ”—i.e., one charged with full legatine authority from Christ (John xvii. 18; xx. 21)—a vicar of Christ to the Church, and not only a representative of the Church to Godwards. Observe also that while St. Paul constantly adds “by the will of God,” or some similar phrase, by way of justifying his assumption of the title, St. Peter

has no need to do more than mention it; *his* claim was never questioned. Again, though St. Silas and St. Mark are with him, they are not associated in the initial greeting, as they would probably have been by St. Paul (*e.g.*, 1 and 2 Thess. i. 1). “Apostle” though Silas was (see 1 Thess. ii. 6), and “faithful brother” to the recipients of the Letter (chap. v. 12), his support would have added but little weight to the utterances of the Rock-Apostle. And yet, with all this quiet assumption of dignity, St. Peter knows no higher title to bestow on himself than that which he held in common with the other eleven—“an Apostle;” not “*the* Apostle,” nor “bishop of bishops,” nor (which means the same thing) “servant of servants.”

To the strangers scattered throughout . . .—Literally, to the elect, sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus. The persons for whom the Letter is destined are very clearly specified. In John vii. 35 we have “the dispersion of the Greeks,” where it clearly means “those of the dispersed Jews who live among the Greeks,” so here “the dispersion of Pontus,” or

Asia, and Bithynia, ⁽²⁾ elect ^{a Rom. 8. 29; 11. 2.} ledge of God the Father,^a according to the foreknow- through sanctification of

"the Pontine dispersion," will mean "those of the dispersed Jews who live in Pontus." In Jas. i. 1 the same word is used, and, in fact, it seems to have been the recognised name for all Jews who did not live in Palestine. The word rendered by "sojourners" means people who are resident for a time among strangers: it might, for instance, describe English people who have taken houses in Paris without becoming naturalised; and, as it is here in so close a connection with geographical words, it seems forced to interpret it metaphorically (as in chap. ii. 11). Palestine, not Heaven, is the home tacitly contrasted; Pontus, not earth, is the place of sojourn. This, then, is clear, that the Apostle of the Circumcision is writing to those of the Circumcision. The addition of the words "the blood of Jesus Christ" is the only thing which shows that they are *Christian* Jews.

Pontus, Galatia . . .—The provinces which between them make up the whole, or nearly so, of what we call Asia Minor, are named in no order that can be assigned a meaning, or that indicates the quarter whence the Letter was written. Possibly the circumstances which called for the writing of the Epistle may have been most striking in Pontus. Notice that at any rate the churches of Galatia and Asia owed their origin to *St. Paul*. Of the founding of the rest we know nothing; perhaps they were founded by St. Silas; but Jewish settlers from Cappadocia and Pontus had heard St. Peter's first sermon on the Church's birth-

day (Acts ii. 9). A few years later and Pliny finds the whole upper shore of Asia Minor overrun and swallowed up by Christians.

⁽²⁾ **Elect.**—A *true* chosen people. This word marks them off from the rest of the Jewish settlers in those parts. It is an evasion of the difficulty to say that they were elect only in the mass, as a body. The election was individual and personal. God selected these particular Hebrews out of the whole number, and made them Christians; but *what* He elected them *to* is abundantly shown in the next words. For all their election they are not certain of salvation, and their title of "elect" implies no more than the fact that God has put them into the visible Church. (See Notes on 1 Thess. i. 4, and 2 Pet. i. 10.)

According to the foreknowledge of God.—The origin of this election, the aim, and the means employed are now touched upon, and connected with the three Divine Persons respectively. (1) The origin. Their election is not accidental, nor yet something done on the spur of the moment, an afterthought of God, but "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"—*i.e., in execution of His fore-arranged scheme*. The word implies not simply a *perception* of the future, but the forming of a *decision*. (Comp. the same word in verse 20, and in Rom. viii. 29; xi. 2.) Though the thought is common also to St. Paul, St. Peter was familiar with it before St. Paul's conversion. (See Acts ii. 23.) (2) The means. The precon-

the Spirit,^a unto obedience | ^{a 2 Thess. 2. 13.} and sprinkling of the

certed scheme of God embraced not only the *choice* of these particular persons for a blessing, but the lines on which the choice was to work itself out—"in a course of sanctification by the Spirit." The words and the thought are identical with those of 2 Thess. ii. 13, but probably so far differ in exact meaning that there "the Spirit" is the spirit sanctified, here it is the Spirit which sanctifies. (Comp. also 1 Thess. iv. 7.) We see that even the blessing of "obedience and sprinkling"—much more that of glory hereafter—is unattainable except in the path of sanctification. (3) The end. That to which God had elected them was not in the first instance the participation of the joys of the post-resurrection life, but the benefits of redemption on this side of the grave. While other "sojourners of the Pontine dispersion" were allowed to remain in the disobedience which characterised the Jews, and trusting to the efficacy of membership in the covenant people, *these* had, in accordance with God's plan, been admitted to "obedience"—*i.e.*, the reception of the gospel facts and precepts (see Note on 2 Thess. i. 8), and to the—

Sprinkling of the blood.—This important phrase must be compared with Heb. ix. 19, and xii. 24, which passages were, perhaps, suggested by it, unless, indeed, the idea had become the common property of the Church already. There is nothing in St. Paul's writings to compare with it. As the people themselves are "sprinkled," and not their houses, the reference cannot be to the Paschal sprinkling

(Ex. xii. 22), but, as in Hebrews, to the scene under Mount Sinai in Ex. xxiv. 8, where, once for all, the old covenant was inaugurated by the sprinkling of the people. It was to that same scene that our Lord referred when He said of the Eucharistic cup, "This is *My* blood of the *new* covenant." Thus, "elect unto the sprinkling of the blood," seems to mean "selected for admission into the new covenant inaugurated by the sprinkling of Christ's blood." But whereas the old covenant was inaugurated by sprinkling the people *collectively* and once for all, the new is inaugurated anew and anew by *individual* application; so that the Eucharistic cup was not (according to the Quaker theory) to be drunk once for all by the Apostles then present as the representatives of the whole subsequent Church. Neither does this inauguration by sprinkling come but once for all in the individual's lifetime, but as often as the covenant is broken by his sin he comes to renew it again. Doubtless the participation of the Holy Communion is the act of "sprinkling" here before St. Peter's mind, it being the one act which betokens membership in the new covenant-people, the new Israel. Of course the application of *blood* in both covenants rests on the notion of a death-forfeit being remitted.

Of Jesus Christ.—He does not say "of the new testament," but substitutes the name of the Victim in whose blood the covenant is inaugurated—Jesus. And who is this Jesus? The Christ! The Messiah! As though Israel at

blood of Jesus Christ: ^a Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

(3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

^a Matt. 26. 28; Heb. 12. 24.

^b 2 Cor. 11. 31; Eph. 1. 3, 17.

¹ Gr. *much*.

Jesus Christ,^b which according to his abundant¹ mercy hath begotten us

Chap i. 3—12. Praise of God for the Gospel and its comforts and glories.

Sinai had been sprinkled with the blood of Moses. What a contrast between the other Jews of Pontus, with *their* Messianic expectations, and these “elect sojourners” sprinkled with *Messiah’s blood*!

Be multiplied.—This occurs again only in 2 Pet. i. 2; Jude verse 2. (Comp. Dan. iv. 1.) It contains an exhortation to progress. There are *some* good things of which we cannot have too much.

(3—12) **PANEGYRIC OF THE GOSPEL FROM A HEBREW POINT OF VIEW.**—The Apostle thanks God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That fact is a regeneration of us, and a pledge of future glory, in view of which such afflictions as beset the Asiatic Hebrews were seen to serve a purpose, and that purpose the very “salvation” which had formed the theme of the Old Testament.

(3) **Blessed.**—A form consecrated to God alone (*e.g.*, Mark xiv. 61; Rom. ix. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 31), a completely different word from the “blessed,” or *happy*, of the Beatitudes; and differing from the “blessed” of the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 28, 42) in that *this* form implies that blessing is always *due* on account of something inherent in the person, while *that* only implies that a blessing has been *received*. The idea of blessing God (literally, *speaking Him well*, Ps. c. 3) is, of course, wholly Hebrew.

Of our Lord Jesus Christ.
—No longer only “the Lord God

of Israel,” as, *e.g.*, 1 Chron. xxix. 10; 2 Chron. vi. 4; Luke i. 68; He is now in a nearer, tenderer relation to these members of the new covenant. He is the Father of the Messiah, and yet the God whom Jesus adores (John xx. 17).

Which according to his abundant mercy.—This is the reason for which God deserves blessing from us. The word “according” never means exactly the same as “in” or “by”; here it rather shows that the particular instance was in keeping with what might have been expected, had we but known, from the “much pity” which God must have felt for creatures so forlorn. Our regeneration was no sudden capricious favour.

Hath begotten us again.—Rather, *begat us again*—the historical moment being here given as that of the resurrection of Christ. This great word, which is St. Peter’s own, being only found again in verse 20, evidently contains the whole meaning of the being “born from above” or “begotten all over again” of John iii. 3; of the “fresh creation” of 2 Cor. v. 17, Gal. vi. 15; of the “regeneration” of Tit. iii. 5; of the “begotten of God” in St. John’s Epistle; and (to a certain extent) of the “brought He us forth” of Jas. i. 18. It seems to indicate that, if it takes effect, it makes a complete change not only in the condition and prospects of

again unto a lively hope^a by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the

^a Titus 3.
5, 7.
^b ch. 3.
21;
Rom.
6. 4.

dead,^b ⁽⁴⁾ to an inheritance incorruptible, and unde-
filed, and that fadeth not

the man, but in the man himself : such a change, for example, as would pass over an animal if it were suddenly to receive the powers of a human being. It is no metaphor when the change from the natural man to a man united with the Incarnate God is described as an act of *creation* parallel only to those of the creation of matter and force (Gen. i. 1, 2), the creation of life (Gen. i. 21), and the creation of humanity (Gen. i. 27), for, according to St. Peter's teaching, we are thus actually made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4).

Unto a lively hope.—Or, *into a living hope*. Before this regeneration there was nothing to look forward to—at best a kind of dead-alive surmise that there *might* be something beyond the weary world. But as the animal we have imagined would find himself suddenly new-begotten into a state in which he was conscious of himself and of God, so *we* found ourselves new-begotten into a state of definite and most energetic expectation of whole *sæcula sæculorum*—worlds beyond worlds—of bliss before us.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—Mystically speaking, the moment of our emergence into this new glory of expectation was that when the Messiah Jesus, who had been cut off, emerged from among the dead. *Then* we saw it all! St. Peter, indeed, is speaking, so far as himself was concerned, not mystically, but literally, as his history before and after the Resurrection shows. To him, and to the

other Apostles, the Resurrection *was* a regeneration, and they became new beings. To subsequent Christians precisely the same effect takes place when (suddenly or gradually) the fact of the Resurrection is acknowledged and its significance realised. (See what St. Paul says, Phil. iii. 10.) Yet we must not confine the meaning of the words to the effects of this conscious realisation. St. Peter is viewing the transaction theologically, *i.e.*, from God's point of view, not phenomenally, from man's. He speaks of the begetting, not of the being born—of the Resurrection itself, not of the preaching of the Resurrection. To God, with whom, according to St. Peter, time does not exist (2 Pet. iii. 8), there is no interval between His begetting of Christ again from the dead (Acts xiii. 33; Rev. i. 5), and His begetting of us again thereby. In the mystery of our union with the Incarnate Word, His historical resurrection *did*, through baptism, in some ineffable manner, infuse into us the grace which makes new creatures of us. Archbishop Leighton says well, "Not only is it (the Resurrection) the exemplar, but the efficient cause of our new birth." (See below, chap. iii. 21; and Rom. vi. 4.)

⁽⁴⁾ **To an inheritance.**—This is structurally parallel to and explanatory of, the clause "into a living hope." We are, as the saying is, born to an estate. This notion of an "inheritance," or property, that we have come in for,

away, reserved in heaven^a | ¹ Or, for ^{us} | by the power of God
for you, ¹ (5) who are kept | ^b Eph. 2.8. | through faith^b unto salva

is particularly Hebrew, occurring very frequently in the Old Testament. The Pontine dispersion had lost their "inheritance" in Palestine, but there is a better in store for them.

Incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.—Exuberant description of the excellencies of the new Canaan. The first epithet contrasts its imperishable nature (see Rom. i. 23; 2 Tim. i. 10) with the fleeting tenure of the earthly Canaan. The second speaks of its freedom from pollutions such as desecrated the first "Holy Land." Perhaps it may specially mean that the new Holy Land will never be profaned by Gentile incursions and tyrannies. The third, and most poetical of all (which is only found besides in Wisd. vi. 12), conveys the notion of the unchanging beauty of that land—no winter in the inheritance to which the Resurrection brings us (Cant. ii. 11).

Reserved.—The perfect tense, *which hath been reserved unto you*, i.e., either in the temporal sense—"kept all this while until you came," or "with a view to you." (Comp. Heb. xi. 40.) He now adds explicitly that it is no earthly, but a heavenly possession.

⁽⁵⁾ **Who are kept.**—This explains the word "you:" "those, I mean, who are under the guardianship of God's power." Bengel says, "As the inheritance hath been preserved, so are the heirs guarded; neither shall it fail them, nor they it."

Through faith.—The Apostle is fearful lest the last words should

give a false assurance. God can guard none of us, in spite of His "power," unless there be a corresponding exertion upon our part—which is here called "faith"—combining the notions of staunch fidelity and of trustfulness in spite of appearances. It is through such trustful fidelity that we are guarded.

Unto salvation.—These words "unto" arise like point beyond point in the endless vista. "Begotten unto an inheritance, which hath been reserved unto you, who are kept safe unto a deliverance." This salvation, spoken of again in verse 9, must not be taken in the bald sense of salvation from damnation. Indeed, the thought of the perdition of the lost does not enter at all into the passage. The salvation, or deliverance, is primarily a deliverance from all the trials and persecutions, struggles and temptations of this life—an emergence into the state of peace and rest, as we can see from the verses that follow.

Ready to be revealed in the last time.—How such an assurance helps to form the very "faith" through which the treasure is secured! That perfect state of peace, that heavenly inheritance, is not something to be prepared hereafter, but *there it is*. If only our eyes were opened, we should already see it. It is all ready, only waiting for the great moment. The tense of the word "revealed" implies the suddenness of the unveiling. It will be but the work of an instant to put aside the curtain and show the inheritance which has been kept hidden so long behind it.

tion ready to be revealed^a in the last time. ⁽⁶⁾Wherein ye greatly rejoice,^b though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness

^a Rom. 8. 18.

^b Matt. 5. 12;
Rom. 5. 3; Jas. 1. 2.

through manifold temptations: ⁽⁷⁾that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though

This, however, will not take place till the *exact* period (so the word for "time" suggests; comp. 2 Thess. ii. 6), and that period will be the last of the world's history. For such teaching the Hebrews would be well prepared by the Old Testament—for instance, comp. Dan. xii. 9, 13—and it was the earliest kind of teaching culled for converts out of the "oracles of God" (Hob. v. 12; vi. 2).

⁽⁶⁾ Wherein ye greatly rejoice. — "His scope," says Leighton, "is to stir up and strengthen spiritual joy in his afflicted brethren; and therefore having set the matter of it before them in the preceding verses, he now applies it, and expressly opposes it to their distresses." There is little doubt as to the antecedent of the word "wherein." At first sight it would seem to be "in the last time," and the thought would then be that this "last time," with all its predicted afflictions, was already begun, and that the Pontine Hebrews were fulfilling the injunction of our Lord in Luke xxi. 28, and "rejoicing" (the word is one of enthusiastic and demonstrative joy) in the near approach of their redemption. This makes good sense, but it is better to see the antecedent in "the whole complex sense of the preceding verses, concerning the hope of glory. In this thing ye rejoice, that ye are begotten again; that there is such an inheritance, and that you are made

heirs of it; that it is kept for you, and you for it; that nothing can come betwixt you and it, and disappoint you of possessing and enjoying it, though there be many deserts and mountains and seas in the way, yet you are ascertained that you shall come safe thither." (Leighton.)

Though now for a season.—Literally, *after having been grieved in the present (if it must be so) for a little while in the midst of manifold temptations.* The Apostle takes his stand at the moment of the revelation and looks back upon the fast-passing present and its griefs. What the temptations were we cannot tell; but the word "manifold" shows that it was not only *one* type of temptation under which all lay alike. The chief was probably the unkind attitude of Gentile neighbours (chaps. ii. 12, 15; iii. 14—17; iv. 4, 12—19), which was the most searching "test of faith." Identical words (in the Greek) occur in Jas. i. 2, 3, so as almost to suggest a common origin—possibly to be found in Rom. v. 3.

If need be.—Or, *if it must be so.* To encourage them to bear up St. Peter throws in this phrase, so as not to take it for *granted* that they will have to suffer; he hopes it may not be so. (Comp. chap. iii. 17.)

⁽⁷⁾ That the trial of your faith.—This depends grammatically upon "having been grieved." The purpose of God's providence

it be tried with fire, ^a might be found unto praise and	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;"> ^a Dan. 12. 10. ^b Rom. 2. 10. </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;">honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:^b</div>
---	---

in sending the griefs is "that the trial of your faith might be found unto praise." The word "trial" here does not mean exactly the same as in the passage of St. James; in that passage it signifies the active testing of faith, *here* it has rather the meaning of the cognate word translated "assurance" in Rom. v. 4, "proof" in 2 Cor. ii. 9, Phil. ii. 22, *i.e.*, the attested worth, the genuine character. This seems necessitated by the comparison of the *trial* with the *gold* itself, as we shall see. You cannot compare an act or process with gold, but you can compare "the genuine character" brought out by the process properly enough. Besides, that which you wish to "praise" at Christ's coming is not the process by which the faith was proved, but the worth of the faith itself. "Faith" seems to mean the same as in verse 5.

Being much more precious than of gold.—There is no reason, or indeed any grammatical right to insert the "of." It should be, *more exceedingly valuable than gold*. He does not say "your faith is more valuable than gold," but "your faith's genuineness is more valuable than gold." It is worth anything to establish the *true character* of your faith; it would be a most serious loss to leave a chance of an imputation upon your Christianity.

That perisheth, though it be tried with fire.—Rather, *which is a thing that perisheth, and yet is tried through fire*. The argument is this. Gold is a perishable thing, and comes to an

end with the rest of the world, or is worn away with handling and is lost; and yet men take great pains to test it and show that it contains no dross, and do so by means of fire. How much more may we expect a fiery trial (chap. iv. 12) to test the character of our belief in the unseen Christ, when that belief is never to come to an end (1 Cor. xiii. 13), and on its freedom from alloy everything depends!

Might be found.—That is, *might clearly prove to be*. The time will come when the gold will be *inspected*, and the Judge, and all the spectators, will "find" that the testing was sufficient and the character satisfactory. "Found unto praise," or, *found for a praise*, is a Hebraism, meaning "found to be a matter of praise." St. Peter is fond of heaping up words of like signification. (See verse 4, and chap. v. 10.) "Praise" is the *language* that will be used about these men's faith; "honour," the *rank* in which they will be placed; "glory," the fervent *admiration* accorded to them: the three words correspond to the regions of word, act, and feeling.

At the appearing of Jesus Christ.—*Revelation* would have been better, as the word in the Greek is the same as in verse 5. This gives the date at which the trial will have done its work: it is the same as the "last time" when the "deliverance" will be revealed. Remember that all through the afflictions and assaults the men are "being guarded by the power of God." There are several words and thoughts in this whole passage

(⁸) whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet ^{a 2 Thes. 1. 7, 10. 12; John 20. 29.} believing,^a ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (⁹) receiving the

which would suggest that Dan. xii. was before the mind of the Apostle more or less consciously.

(⁸) **Whom, having not seen.**—Said in contrast to the word “revelation” in the last verse: “whom you love already, though He is not yet revealed, so that you have not as yet seen Him.” There seems to be a kind of tender pity in the words, as spoken by one who himself had seen so abundantly (Acts iv. 20; x. 41; 2 Pet. i. 16). In this and the following verse we return again from the sorrow to the joy, and to the true cause of that joy, which is only to be found in the love of Jesus Christ. There is another reading, though not so good either in sense or in authority: “whom, without *knowing* Him, ye love.” Bengel remarks that this is intended for a paradox, sight and knowledge being the usual parents of love.

Ye love.—The word of calm and divinely-given attachment, in fact the usual word in the New Testament, that which Christ used in questioning the writer (John xx. 15), not the word of warm human friendship with which St. Peter then answered Him.

In whom.—To be construed, not with “ye rejoice,” but with “believing.” The participles give the grounds of the rejoicing: “because at present without seeing ye believe in Him none the less, therefore ye rejoice.” The word “rejoice” takes us back to verse 6: “ye greatly rejoice, I repeat.” Notice again the stress laid on

faith; we have already had it three times mentioned. St. Peter, whose own faith gained him his name and prerogative, is, at least, as much the Apostle of faith as St. Paul is, though his conception of it, perhaps, slightly differs from St. Paul's. The definition given by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi. 1) might have been, perhaps was, drawn from a study of St. Peter's writings. Our present verse gives us the leading thought of “faith” as it appears in both of these works addressed to Hebrews, viz., its being the opposite of *sight*, “the evidence of things not seen,” rather than as the opposite of *works*. And the main object of both these Epistles is to keep the Hebrews from slipping back from internal to external religion, *i.e.*, to strengthen *faith*. (Comp. Heb. iii. 12.) The Apostle is full of admiration for a faith which (unlike his own) was not based on sight. (See John xx. 29—an incident which may have been in the writer's mind.)

Unspeakable.—The beautiful Greek word (which means “unable to find expression in words”) seems to have been coined by St. Peter.

Full of glory.—Literally, *that hath been glorified*; *i.e.*, a joy that has reached its ideal pitch, and feels no further sense of imperfection; a signification of the word found, for instance, in Rom. viii. 30.

(⁹) **Receiving the end of your faith.**—The “*end* of our faith” means, the *object* to which

end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls." ^{a Matt. 16, 25, 26.} ^{b Luke 1. 69, 70.} ⁽¹⁰⁾ Of which salvation the prophets^b have enquired

our faith is directed, the thing we believed *for*. And "faith" catches up the "believing" of last verse, so that, in reading, the accent of the sentence falls on "end," not on "faith;" and the whole clause is added to justify the statement that we rejoice with a joy that has already attained its full perfection. The reason is, he says, because we receive already, in the present life, the object of all this trusting without sight; we need not wait till the next world to attain our glorification.

The salvation of your souls.—It might be simply, *salvation of souls*, including other men's besides our own, but the context is against it, and the absence of articles is characteristic of St. Peter. It seems at first sight not a very exalted object for our faith to work to, the deliverance, or safety, of our own souls. And yet our Lord fully recognises the instinct of the higher self-preservation as that to which the ultimate appeal must be made (Matt xvi. 25, 26). He could give His own soul a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28); He could save others and not Himself (Matt. xxvii. 42); St. Paul could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake, "that they might be saved" (Rom. ix. 3; x. 1); Moses could ask to be "blotted out of the book" (Ex. xxxii. 32); and yet the fact remains, that in seeking our own welfare, in the highest sense, we are fulfilling a primal law of our being, imposed upon us by the Creator. We are bound to make that our first object, if it were only to gratify Him who has no pleasure

in the death of him that dieth, even if we could possibly divest ourselves of all "selfish" interest in the matter.

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

The Buddhist longing for Nirvâna is as far as possible removed from the healthy spirit of Christianity. "Salvation" here seems to have widened its meaning since verse 5; while *there* the main thought was final deliverance from the afflictions of life, *here* the salvation is said to be received in the very midst of all these afflictions. The addition of the word "souls," appears to make the difference. For the soul, there is *present* salvation, because persecutions, &c., do not touch it, and it is *capable* of the most complete emancipation from the evils of *sin* (Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 69, 71, 75; Rom. vi. 14; vii. 24, 25). Salvation, then, is the restoration of man to the ideal excellence from which he was fallen: it contains—here, at any rate—no allusion to "damnation" as an opposite.

(10) Now St. Peter brings his doctrine home to the hearts of his readers of the Dispersion, by showing them how Scriptural it is. Surely they will not "draw back" (Heb. x. 39), but believe on to the purchasing of their souls, when they consider that all the prophets looked forward with envy to the prize now in their hands.

(10) Of which salvation.—The "of" stands for "concerning,"

and searched diligently,^a ^{a Matt. 13. 17.} | *that should come unto you:*
 who prophesied of the grace | ⁽¹¹⁾ searching what, or what

"with regard to"; and the salvation which formed the subject of investigation to the prophets was the present deliverance of the believing soul from sin and gloom, as well as the salvation yet future. It is difficult not to believe that the song of Zacharias was in St. Peter's mind when he thus wrote; the theme of that song is precisely the glory of present salvation through Christ, and the fulfilment of prophecy thereby: "Blessed be the Lord God . . . who hath raised up a horn of salvation for us . . . , as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets,—salvation from our enemies . . . that we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days; and thou *too*, little child, shalt be called a prophet . . . to give knowledge of salvation unto His people."

Have enquired and searched diligently.—Rather, *did inquire*; for our present version tends to convey the notion that the prophetic writings which we now possess are the *result* of the inquiry. This would be wrong. Calvin rightly says: "When he states that the prophets inquired and examined, this refers not to their writings or teaching, but to the private longing with which each was fired." In fact, St. Peter goes on to say that the writings which the Holy Spirit impelled them to make were actually the text on which their longings were the comment: they endeavoured to understand what they themselves had written. The two Greek words give a much more lively picture than the English, of

the intense eagerness of the search, and of the depth to which it penetrated. If these great prophets took such pains to understand our present salvation, we ought to take heed not to "let it slip." Precisely the same argument is used for precisely the same purpose by our Lord in Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

Who prophesied of the grace.—This is a description of the prophetic scriptures. The whole subject of the Old Testament is the bounty of God under the New; and this was what the prophets tried to realise.

The grace that should come unto you.—Perhaps the words in italics might be with advantage changed into, "the grace *in reserve* for you:" the word is the same as in verse 4. "Grace" here seems to mean little more than "favour" or "bounty," not the ordinary theological sense. The "favour" consists in our salvation.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Searching.**—This further explains the "inquired and searched" above; it particularises the object of the inquiry. They knew that they spoke "concerning a salvation," but they did not know the *details*. The present passage is perhaps the most striking in the whole New Testament in regard to the doctrine of prophetic inspiration. Assuming that the prophets did not speak simply of their own human calculation, but somehow under the influence of the Divine Spirit, we are brought to face the question, *how far* their utterances were their own, and how far suggested to them from on high. The doctrine of Montanism, which has not alto-

manner of time the Spirit ^a of Christ which was in	^a Matt. 22. 43; 2 Pet. 1. 21.	them did signify, when it testified beforehand the
--	---	---

gether died out of the Church yet, asserts that from first to last prophecy is superhuman; that every word and letter is forced upon the man by a power not his own, which leaves him no choice. God, and God alone, is responsible for every syllable. The human will and intelligence need not even concur in the message they deliver, nor even be conscious that they are delivering it. Thus Montanus makes God to say through him: "Lo, man is as a lyre, and I am as that which strikes the chords: the man is unconscious, and I alone wake." On the other hand, some of the early opponents of Montanism went so far as to say that the inspired writers had a clear and immediate perception, a complete insight into the mysteries which they foretold,—that Isaiah, for instance, saw, as plainly as we do, Mary and Jesus in his prophecy of Immanuel. Our present verses show a doctrine between the two. The prophets find themselves impelled to say words which they are conscious of choosing and using, but which they feel to have a deeper meaning than they themselves were conscious of intending. It is clear to them (verse 12) that what they meant primarily as applying to present circumstances, was in reality being overruled by the Spirit to apply more fully to the future. But what that future was they struggled, and half in vain, to know. We may apply to them what Keble says of the Greek poets:—

"As little children lisp and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thoughts to
those high bards were given."

What, or what manner of time.—If this be right, it must mean, "what exact or approximate date." But the simplest translation would be, *to whom, or what period, the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing*. This would give new significance to the sentence. They were aware that they were speaking of a *Messiah*; but who the man should be who would hold that office, or at what period of their history he would arise, this was what they longed to know. They foresaw a Christ, but they could not foresee Jesus; they could give to their Christ no definite position in future history. (Comp. Matt. xxii. 42; Luke iii. 15; xxiii. 35; John iii. 28; vii. 26, 41; Acts ii. 36, and often.)

The Spirit of Christ which was in them.—They are conscious of a power *within* them which is not themselves, "moving" them. And this power is described as "the Spirit of Christ." Now, observe that a change has come over St. Peter's way of speaking. Hitherto, he has always said "Jesus Christ," his object being to keep constantly before the eyes of these Hebrews the truth which he was the first man to enunciate, viz., "*Thou art the Christ*" (Matt. xvi. 16), that *Jesus* was the person who fulfilled all that was expected of the Messiah. "Christ" is not once used by St. Peter (as it is often by St. Paul) as a proper name: it always marks the office, not the person. Therefore we may not prove by this expression two doctrines, however true they may be in themselves, which are commonly

sufferings of Christ,^a and <sup>a Isa. 53;
Dan. 9.
26.</sup> the glory that should fol-

sought to be supported by it, viz., the pre-existence of our Lord, and the procession of the Holy Ghost from Him as well as from the Father. In spite of a well-quoted passage in Barnabas (chap. v.), "The prophets had the gift from Him, and prophesied of Him," it cannot here mean, "the Holy Ghost given them by our Lord Himself." Besides, it is theologically incorrect to say that Christ as the Anointed had any pre-existence, except as an indefinite hope in the minds of the Hebrews. The *Son*, the unincarnate Word, pre-existed, but it is Apollinarianism to say that *Jesus* had any existence before the Incarnation,—still more Christ, since it may be doubted whether the Incarnate Word became "Christ" until His baptism. That, at least, appears to be St. Peter's doctrine (Acts x. 38). "The Spirit of Messiah," then, at any rate when applied to the ages before Christ came, must have a different meaning. Probably not exactly "the Spirit that was to anoint and be in the Messiah," but rather, "the Messiah-spirit" or "the Messianic Spirit." The prophets wondered who the man was, and where he would live, to whom this Messianic inspiration which they felt within was pointing. St. Peter himself, we repeat, was the first person who fully knew the answer.

When it testified beforehand.—A much more solemn word in the original than it looks in the English, and used by no other writer than St. Peter. It does not mean simply, "when it bore witness beforehand;" but "testifying"

means an appeal to Heaven to mark and record the words so spoken: "when with a solemn appeal it announced beforehand." Was he not thinking of the awful appeal in Dan. xii. 7?

The sufferings of Christ.—This unduly contracts the fullness of the Greek, which reads, *the sufferings for Christ* (just as we had before "the grace for you"), i.e., "these sufferings in reserve for Messiah." The Old Testament passages which may be supposed to be chiefly indicated are Isa. liii. and (still more) Dan. ix. 24—26. If it be asked how St. Peter *knew* that the prophets had these longings and doubts, we answer, that it was not only a probable *guess*, but the result of a study of Daniel, who records again and again the prophetic agony of his search into the future. Beware of treating the title "Christ" as a proper name. *Eight* out of the *ten* times that St. Peter uses the word by itself, i.e., without "Jesus" or "the Lord," it is in direct connection with *suffering* (here, and in chaps. i. 19; ii. 21; iii. 18; iv. 1, 13, 14; v. 1). Conversely, he *never* speaks of the sufferings of *Jesus Christ*. That is to say, he loves to dwell upon the Passion of our Lord, not in its *personal* but its *official* aspect. The striking point is that the *Messiah* should have suffered thus. It was especially necessary to show this in any effort to retain the faith of the *Hebrews*. Comp. Luke xxiv. 26—46 (Peter present); Acts iii. 18 (Peter speaking); xvii. 3 (to *Hebrews*); xxvi. 23. And we can see a reason for the insistence in

low. ⁽¹²⁾ Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto ^{a Dan. 10. 14.} themselves,^a but unto us they did minister the

St. Peter's history. The very same day, apparently, when he had announced his belief that Jesus was the Messiah, he took Him to task for speaking of sufferings and shame. He never could forget the reprimand, like a sword-cut, which he received. The whole Epistle may be said to be an expansion of what Jesus said in answer (Matt. xvi. 23—27). Some commentators include in this phrase of "the sufferings in reserve for Messiah," the thought of the sufferings of the Church as well; but it seems far-fetched, especially when we see the true meaning of the word "Christ." Finally, we may add, that some would join very closely together the words for "signify" and "testifying beforehand," which would give us this sense: "examining, in reserve for *whom*, or for what period, the Spirit, with its solemn appeal beforehand, was pointing out these sufferings in reserve for Messiah." This is possible, and keeps the same sense, but it unnecessarily complicates the sentence.

And the glory that should follow.—Literally, *and the glories after them*. The plural "glories" corresponds to the plural "sufferings,"—the one as multiform as the other; resurrection, ascension, re-assumption of the divine glory (John xvii. 5), triumphs of Church history, restitution of all things. The sufferings and subsequent glories of the Christ form, of course, together the whole of the gospel.

⁽¹²⁾ Unto whom it was revealed.—As verse 11 expanded and expounded the words "in-

quired and searched," so the first part of verse 12 expounds the words "prophesied of the grace in reserve for you." That is to say, the revelation here spoken of is not a special revelation sent in answer to their laborious musings, but rather the very thing which occasioned them; the perplexity consisted in feeling that God had a further meaning for their words. And the exact limits of the revelation are mentioned: they were shown that they spoke for the benefit of futurity, and no more! What a "trial of faith!" What a sublime disappointment! (Heb. xi. 40.)

Unto us.—Far the better reading is, *unto you*. It is a distinct characteristic of this Epistle, that "we," "us," "our," are so seldom used (in the best text) where they might have been expected. Where St. Paul throws in his own sympathy, and puts himself on a footing with those whom he addresses, St. Peter utters his lofty pastoral from above. There are but four places in the Epistle (chaps. i. 3; ii. 24; iii. 18; iv. 17) where he associates himself thus with his brethren, and one of those (chap. ii. 24) is really a quotation, and one (chap. iii. 18) at best a very doubtful reading. The same tendency may be observed in his speech (Acts xv. 7), where the right reading is "made choice among *you*."

The things.—In the original simply *them*; so that a semicolon might better follow than a comma, and *which things* be put instead of "which." The most natural thing is to suppose that the pronoun

things, which are now reported unto you by them

that have preached the gospel unto you with the

represents the preceding "sufferings in reserve for Messiah and the glories after." In what sense, then, could the prophets "minister," either to themselves or to us, the sufferings and glories of Messiah? The word is one which signifies a servant bringing to his master the things which he needs—commonly used (*e.g.*, John xii. 2) of serving up a meal; and the prophets are said to *serve* the Messianic sufferings and glories to us, to wait upon us with them, to present them to our use and study and comfort. (Comp. chap. iv. 10.) When it says, however, that they ministered them "*not* to themselves but to us," we must not suppose that they derived *no* comfort from their predictions (see John viii. 56): the "*not*" must be taken in the same sense as in "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix. 13).

Which are now reported unto you.—Rather, *which things* (*i.e.*, the gospel story) *now* (in contrast with the days of the prophets) *were* (not "*are*") *openly declared to you* (in all their details, in contrast with the dim and vague way in which they were seen before). Such is the force of this compound Greek verb in John iv. 25; Acts xix. 18; xx. 20, 27.

By them that have preached.—More correctly, *through those who preached*; the difference being that St. Peter is referring to the *first* bearers of the gospel to those parts, not to *all* who from that time to the date of the Letter had preached. This is a point well worth noticing. The phrase seems to show that St. Peter himself was not of the num-

ber. Perhaps half the churches which received the Letter looked to St. Paul as their founder. (See last note on verse 1.) Here, then, we find the Rock-Apostle authoritatively setting his seal to the teaching of his junior colleague, just as he does in the Second Epistle (chap. iii. 15). It seems to imply that these Jewish Christians were beginning to feel a reaction from St. Paul's evangelical teaching; and the Apostle of the Circumcision is called in to enforce what the Apostle of the Uncircumcision had taught. The revolt of the Hebrew Christians in *Asia* from evangelical teaching appears again at a still later period (Rev. ii. 9; iii. 9). It was, perhaps, only with *Jewish* Christians that such an appeal from St. Paul to St. Peter would be made, and need not imply superiority throughout the whole Church. St. Peter's perfect concurrence with St. Paul here is a sufficient contradiction to the Tübingen theory of their irreconcilable divergence—only the Tübingen school reject the Epistle on the ground that it makes the Apostles too harmonious!

With the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.—The magnificent phrase seems meant to contrast the *full* effusion of the Spirit now, with His limited working in the prophets (verse 11). But it contains more teaching than this. The tense of the participle "*sent*" is such as might without violence be rendered "*sent once and for ever*," "*sent in a moment*." Now, remember that almost undoubtedly some of the recipients of the Letter

Holy Ghost sent down^a | ^a Acts 2. | the angels desire to look
 from heaven; which things | ^b Eph. 3. | into.^b
 10.

(see last Note on verse 1) were eye-witnesses of His being "sent" to St. Peter and the rest on the Day of Pentecost. St. Peter, then, here claims for St. Paul (and St. Silas perhaps) the very same inspiration with which himself was furnished. And as here he claims full inspiration for St. Paul's *preaching*, so he does afterwards for his *writing* (2 Pet. iii. 15).

Which things the angels.—The "which things" here is grammatically parallel to the "which things" of the last sentence, and therefore would mean "the sufferings of Messiah and the glories after." But logically we have to go back to the beginning of verse 10: "Do I say that *prophets*, who had the mysteries of our redemption on their lips, yet pored in vain to catch the detailed meaning which you catch? Nay; angels (not "*the angels*"), who were present at every detail, and bore an active part in it all (see Matt. i. 20; iv. 11; xxviii. 2; Luke i. 26; ii. 9; xxii. 43; John i. 52),—*angels*, of whom He 'was seen' (1 Tim. iii. 16),—covet now to exchange places with you that they may gaze into the mystery." The word which has here shrunk into our word "to look into," means really *to bend aside to see*. In its literal sense it occurs in John xx. 5, 11, and in Luke xxiv. 12 (a verse not found in the best text), of people standing at the side of the cave so as not to get in their own light, and stooping sideways to peer in. Metaphorically it is used in Jas. i. 25, where see Note. It seems to mean a strained atten-

tion to something which has caught your eye somewhat out of your usual line of sight. Here then, the intention is to show that we are in a better position to understand the mysteries of redemption, not only than prophets, but also than angels; and they covet to stoop from their own point of view to ours. And why so? Not because of the inherent mysteriousness of the union of the two natures in Christ, for of that they are as intelligent as we, or more so; but because they are incapable of fully understanding *human* nature, flesh and blood, with its temptations and pains, its need of a Saviour. In Francia's great picture, the two angels kneel by weeping Mary and dead Christ without a trace of grief on their countenances. The Son of God Himself only became capable of entering into our infirmities through becoming flesh, and experiencing the same (Heb. ii. 16, 18; iv. 15). Several passages show us that the tragedy of human history is by no means enacted only for the benefit of the actors, but as a lesson (possibly, as Archbishop Whately pointed out, only a single *illustration* out of many in one lesson) for the instruction of unfallen spirits (1 Cor. iv. 9; Eph. iii. 10; 1 Tim. iii. 16). Our present passage has impressed itself on Christian lyrics as much, perhaps, as any in the New Testament. Charles Wesley well strikes the meaning in many of his poems: as—

"Ask the Father's Wisdom how,
 Him that did the means ordain;
 Angels round our altars bow
 To search it out in vain;"

(13) Wherefore gird up
Chap. i. 13—25. the loins^a of
Exhortation to your mind, be
live like regenerate persons. sober, and

^a Luke 12. 35.
^b verse 3.
¹ Gr. perfectly.
^c ver. 10.

hope^b to the end¹ for
the grace^c that is to be
brought unto you at
the revelation of Jesus

or again—

“Angels in *flat amazement*
Around our altars hover,
With *eager gaze* adore the grace
Of our Eternal Lover.”

Though very possibly the divine intention of the cherubim over the mercy-seat (Ex. xxv. 20) may have been to symbolise that which is here said, yet it is not to be thought that St. Peter was consciously thinking of the symbol.

(13—25) GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING.—This salvation being so magnificent, the Asiatic Hebrews must cling to it tenaciously, in holiness, in reverence caused by consideration of the cost of it, and in charity: the gospel they have received cannot be improved upon.

(13) Gird up the loins of your mind.—A metaphor from persons gathering up the flowing Oriental dress (which had been let down for repose), so as to be ready for energetic action (*e.g.*, 1 Kings xviii. 46, for running; Job xxxviii. 3, for arguing). What exact kind of action St. Peter meant them here to prepare for we need not inquire. A “mind,” rather than “soul” or “heart,” seems to bespeak *practical intelligence*. Thus when the *Galatians*, too, began to fall from evangelical to Judaic religion St. Paul calls them “senseless” (Gal. iii. 1).

Be sober.—Not in the literal sense, but with the same notion of alertness as in “gird up”; sobriety

and wakefulness are often combined (*e.g.*, chap. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 6).

Hope to the end.—Literally, *hope perfectly*, or, *thoroughly*, or, *with completeness*. “Indeed this hope,” says Leighton, “is perfect in continuance, it is a *hope unto the end*, because it is perfect in its nature.” The chief thought, however, is that the hope should not be half-hearted, dispirited. St. Peter brings us back to what he began with, that ours is a *living* hope. The exhortation is exactly of the same nature as that which pervades the Epistle to the Hebrews (see, for instance, Heb. iii. 6, 14; vi. 11), and for the same reason—*i.e.*, that spiritual sloth, combined with fear of man, was beginning to turn these Jewish Christians back to dead works. “Hope on,” in these passages, is tantamount to “remain Christians.”

For the grace.—Not exactly “hope for the grace,” *i.e.*, expect confidently that it will come: rather, “hope upon the grace,” as in 1 Tim. v. 5, the only other place where the same construction is used, and where it is rendered “*trusteth in God*.” Here, therefore, it is, “confidently hope (for salvation, glory, &c.) on the strength of the grace.” The grace is the same as in verse 10.

That is to be brought.—“If we will render it strictly, it is, *That is a-bringing to you*. That blessedness, that consummation of grace, the saints are hastening forward to, walking on in their way

Christ; ⁽¹⁴⁾ as obedient a Rom. 12. 2. b ch. 4. 3. yourselves according to children, not fashioning^a the former lusts^b in your

wheresoever it lies indifferently, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report. And as they are hastening to it, it is hastening to them in the course of time; every day brings it nearer to them than before; and notwithstanding all difficulties and dangers in the way, they that have their eye and their hopes upon it shall arrive at it, and it shall be brought safe to their hand; all the malice of men and devils shall not be able to cut them short of this *grace that is a-bringing* to them against the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Leighton). On the tense, see also Note on 1 Thess. i. 10. Notice also that it is now the *personal Name*, not the official title. St. Peter is enforcing the gospel as we know it; we no longer "search unto *whom*" the title of the Messiah belongs.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **As obedient children.**—Literally, *as children of obedience*—children, *i.e.*, in the sense of relationship, not of age. It is characteristic of the writer to keep one thought underlying many digressions, and so here, the appeal to them as "children" is based on the "begotten again" of verse 3, and "inheritance" of verse 4; it comes up again in verse 17, "the Father"; in verse 22, "the brethren"; and again in verse 23, "begotten again." The usual characteristic of Jews in the New Testament is *disobedience*. (See Note on 2 Thess. i. 8.) The "as" means "in keeping with your character of," just as we say in common English, "Do so *like* obedient children."

Not fashioning yourselves

according to.—This rare verb is the same as is translated "be not conformed," in Rom. xii. 2, from which some think it is borrowed. The expression is a little confused, the lusts themselves being spoken of as a model not to be copied, where we should rather have expected "not being conformed to your former selves."

The former lusts in your ignorance—*i.e.*, which you indulged before you came to know the gospel truth—of course implying also that the ignorance was the mother of the lusts. The same assumption is made here which we shall find again below in chap. ii. 9, and still more in chap. iv. 3, that the recipients of this Letter had lived in ignorance and in vice up to a certain point of their lives. And it is contended, with much plausibility, that both accusations show the recipients of the letter to be of Gentile and not of Jewish origin. It is true that lusts of the flesh are not usually laid to the charge of the Jews, as they are of the Gentiles. (See, for instance, 1 Thess. iv. 5; Eph. iv. 17.) It is also true that the ignorance with which the Jews are charged (for instance, Acts iii. 17; Rom. x. 3; 1 Tim. i. 13) has quite a different tendency from this. But it may be answered that such details are of little weight in comparison with the direct evidence of the first verse, and the indirect evidence of the whole tone of the Letter; also that, putting out of sight expressions of St. Paul's which have nothing to do with St. Peter, "ignorance" is surely not an unnatural word to represent the con-

ignorance: ^a (15) but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (16) because it is written, ^c Be

^a ch. 2. 9.

^b Luke 11. 2.

^c Lev. 11.

41;

Matt. 5.

48.

ye holy; for I am holy. (17) And if ye call on the Father, ^b who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's

trast between the state of unregenerate Jews, and the same persons when they have attained to knowledge higher than that of prophets or of angels; that even Jews were men of flesh and blood, and therefore not exempt from the temptations of the flesh, from which mere legalism was quite insufficient to protect them (see Rom. vii. 8, "sin through the commandment wrought in me *every lust*"); that in Heb. v. 2, and ix. 7, Jewish people are supposed to have need of a high priest to bear with and atone for their "ignorance" and "ignorances;" that the same writer contemplates the possibility of "many" of his Hebrews being "defiled" through fleshly sin (Heb. xii. 15, 16), and deems it necessary to urge strongly the sanctions of marriage (Heb. xiii. 4).

(15) But as he which hath called you is holy.—More correctly, *But according to* (or, *after*, i.e., in the likeness of: see Eph. iv. 24, "after God") *the Holy One who called you*. The "calling" is mentioned because of the obligation it imposes upon us. Bengel notices how fond St. Peter is of the words "call," "calling." (See chaps. ii. 9, 21; iii. 9; v. 10; 2 Pet. i. 3, 10.) The "call" here seems to mean specially the call to be *children of God*.

So be ye holy.—Perhaps the imperative would come out stronger thus, *Do ye also show yourselves holy in every part of your conduct*.

Leighton says, "He hath severed you from the mass of the profane world, and picked you out to be jewels for Himself; He hath set you apart for this end, that you may be holy to Him, as the Hebrew word that signifies 'holiness' imports 'setting apart,' or fitting for a peculiar use; be not then untrue to His design. It is *sacrilege* for you to dispose of yourselves after the impure manner of the world, and to apply yourself to any profane use, whom God hath consecrated to Himself."

(16) Be ye holy; for I am holy.—The better reading here is, *Ye shall be holy*; it is still, however, a command, not a promise—except that all God's commands are promises. The command comes some five or six times in the Book of Leviticus, addressed not only to the Levites, but to all the people. It would, therefore, apply twice over to the recipients of this letter by virtue of their twofold consecration, in the old and in the new Israel.

(17) And if.—The "if" casts no doubt, but, on the contrary, serves to bring out the necessary logical connection between invoking the Father—and such a Father—and fear. (See Note on 1 Thess. iv. 14.)

Ye call on the Father.—We might paraphrase by "if you use the Lord's Prayer." (Refer again to verses 3, 14.) The word seems not only to mean "if you appeal

work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: ^a ^{Mal. 1. 6.} ⁽¹⁸⁾ forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed

to the Father," but "if you appeal to the Father by the *title* of Father." (Comp. Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6.)

Who without respect of persons judgeth.—This "judgeth," or *decideth*, refers not only to the great judgment of the last day, but is used in reference to the word "if ye *call upon* the Father." That word has a forensic sense (in which it is used in Acts xxv. 11) of lodging an *appeal*, and every time we lodge our appeal to the Father on the ground of His Fatherhood, He decides the case, but decides it without favour—makes no allowance to our wrong-doing on the ground of being His regenerate children, and certainly none on the ground of being of the Hebrew race. That this last notion finds place here we may see from St. Peter's words in Acts x. 34, 35. He decides "according to every man's work"—*i.e.*, upon the individual merits of the case before Him. The man's "work" (not "works") embraces all his conduct in the lump, as a single performance, which is either good on the whole or bad on the whole.

Pass the time . . . in fear.

—The word for "pass" really is the same as the "conversation" of verse 15, and is intended to take our thought back to it: "As obedient children, be holy in every part of your conduct; and if you wish for favour from the Father, see that that conduct is characterised by *fear*." "This fear," says Archbishop Leighton, "is not cowardice (nor superstition, we may add); it drowns all lower

fears, and begets true fortitude; the righteous dare do anything but offend God. Moses was bold and fearless in dealing with a proud and wicked king, but when God appeared he said (as the Apostle informs us), 'I exceedingly fear and quake.'" This extract well contrasts with the meaning which some would apparently thrust into the word "fear," as though it meant that the position of the Christians, as "aliens" in the midst of a hostile world, required a timid attitude towards man. The "fear" of the *Father* may be seen in the first two clauses of the Lord's Prayer itself.

Your sojourning.—See on verse 1, "strangers." Because the word is metaphorical here and in chap. ii. 11, is no reason why the similar word should be so there, in quite a different context. The expression here sets a limit for the discipline of fear, and at the same time suggests a reason for it—children though they are, they are not yet entered on their "inheritance" (verse 4), and have to secure it.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Forasmuch as ye know.**—This correctly paraphrases the simple original *knowing*. Security, which is the opposite of the fear of the Father, is incompatible with knowing by whose and what anguish alone the inheritance could be purchased for us.

Corruptible things.—St. Peter's contempt for "silver and gold" is shown early in his history (Acts iii. 6; comp. chap. iii. 4). Gold and silver will come to an end with everything else that is material.

with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your	^{a Mark 7. 7.}	vain ^a conversation received by tradition from your
---	-----------------------------	---

Observe that, by contrast, the "blood of Christ" is implied to be *not* corruptible; and that, not because of the miraculous incorruption of Jesus Christ's flesh, but because the "blood of Christ" of which the Apostle here speaks is *not material*. The natural blood of Jesus was only the sign and sacrament of that by which He truly and inwardly redeemed the world. (See Isa. liii. 12, "He poured out His soul unto death," and Heb. x. 9, 10.)

Redeemed . . . from your vain conversation.—We have to notice (1) what the "redemption" means, and (2) what the readers were redeemed from. Now (1) the word "redeem" is the same which is used in Luke xxiv. 21 ("We used to hope that *He* was the person destined to redeem Israel"), and in Titus ii. 14 ("Gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity"), and nowhere else. The substantive appears in Luke i. 68; ii. 38; Heb. ix. 12, to represent the *action* of redeeming; and in Acts vii. 35, of Moses, to represent the *person* who effects such a redemption. Properly it means to ransom a person, to get them out of slavery or captivity by paying a ransom (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; comp. 1 Tim. ii. 6). The notion of an actual ransom paid, however, was apt to slip away, as in the case of Moses just quoted, who certainly gave nothing of the nature of an equivalent to Pharaoh for the loss of his serfs. So that here, as in all passages relating to the Atonement, we must be very careful not to press the metaphor,

or to consider it as more than a metaphor. The leading notion here is not that of paying an equivalent, but to call closer attention to the state in which the readers were before. It was a servitude like that of Egypt, or a captivity like that of Babylon, from which they needed a "ransomer" like Moses or Zerubbabel. What then was that condition? (2) St. Peter describes it as a "vain conversation traditional from the fathers." The word "conversation" again catches up verses 15, 17, "be holy in your conduct; let it be a conduct of fear; for your old vain conduct needed a terrible ransom before you could be set at liberty from it." The question is whether a Gentile or Jewish mode of life is intended. If it meant merely as regards religious worship it would suit either way, for it was of the essence of Roman state "religion" that it should be the same from generation to generation. (See Acts xxiv. 14.) But "conversation" or "manner of life" is far too wide a word to be thus limited, and at the same time the word "tradition" implies (in the New Testament) something sedulously taught, purposely handed down from father to son as an heirloom, so that it could not be applied to the careless, sensual life of Gentiles, learned by example only. On the other hand, among the Jews "tradition" entered into the minutest details of daily life or "conversation." (See Mark vii. 3, 4—the Petrine Gospel.) It was a matter of serious "tradition" how a cup was to be washed. "Vain" (*i.e.*, frivolous)

fathers; ⁽¹⁹⁾ but with the <sup>a Isa. 53.
7; John
1: 29;
Rev. 5.
6.</sup> as of a lamb^a without
precious blood of Christ, blemish and without spot :

seems not an unnatural epithet to apply to such a mode of life, especially to one who had heard Mark vii. 7. It would seem, then, that the readers of this Letter were certainly Jews by birth. But would the Apostle of the Circumcision, the supposed head of the legal party in the Church, dare to call Judaism a "vain conversation," to stigmatise it (the single compound adjective in the Greek has a contemptuous ring) as "imposed by tradition of the fathers," and to imply that it was like an Egyptian bondage? We have only to turn to Acts xv. 10, and we find him uttering precisely the same sentiments, and calling Judaism a slavish "yoke," which was not only so bad for Gentiles that to impose it upon them was to tempt God, but also was secretly or openly felt intolerable by himself, by all the Jews there present, and even by the fathers who had imposed it. Judaism, itself, then, in the form it had then assumed, was one of the foes and oppressors from which Christ came to "ransom" and "save" His people. (See Notes on verses 9, 10, and comp. Acts xiii. 39.)

⁽¹⁹⁾ **With the precious blood of Christ.**—"Precious" means, not "much prized by us," but *costly*, precious in itself; opposed to the perishableness of gold and silver. Notice that it is not "Jesus," but "Christ," *i.e.*, the Messiah. No price short of the "blood," *i.e.*, the death, of the Messiah could free the Jews from the thralldom of their "vain conversation." (Comp. verse 2 and

Note.) How Christ's death freed them from it is not explained here; but we may give a twofold explanation, as we did of His resurrection being our regeneration, in verse 3. Historically it did so, because when they came to realise that their Messiah could only reach His glories through suffering it gave them a new insight into the whole meaning of the system under which they had been brought up. It did also, however, doubtless, in a more mysterious way, such as we cannot imagine, procure in God's sight their emancipation; and the following verses show that again St. Peter is thinking more of the theological than of the phenomenal side of the occurrence.

As of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

—We might roughly paraphrase it by, "as of a sacrificial victim, to the sufficiency of whose offering no exception can be taken." The word "as" shows that in St. Peter's mind the notion of a "sacrifice," in reference to the atonement, was only a simile, or metaphor, just as it was with the notion of "ransom." Once more observe that the sacrifice was offered to effect a redemption which for the readers had already taken place. (Comp. Heb. ix. 14.) The primary thought in mentioning a "lamb" is, of course, that of sacrifice; but when we come to consider why that particular sacrificial animal was named rather than another, it is, no doubt, for two reasons. First, because of the whiteness, the helplessness, the youth, the innocence, and patience, which make it a natural symbol

(20) who verily was fore-^a ordained before the foun-^b dation of the world,^a but was manifest^b in these last

a Acts 2. 23; Rev. 13. 8.
b John 1. 31.

of our Lord. (Comp. *Ecce Homo*, p. 6, ed. 3.) The second reason is to be found in St. Peter's own life. The first thing that we know in his history was a putting together of those two words—Messiah, and the Lamb (John i. 36, 40, 41). Neither he nor St. John (see Rev. v. 6, *et al.*) ever forgot that cry of the Baptist. They, no doubt, understood that cry to refer, not primarily to the Paschal, or any other sacrifice, but to Isa. liii. 7, and perhaps to Gen. xxii. 8. A word in the next verse will make it clearer that St. Peter really had the Baptist consciously before his mind when he thus wrote.

(20) **Who verily was fore-ordained.**—There is a sharp contrast intended between the two clauses of this verse, and in the Greek the tenses are different. "Who *had been foreknown*, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but for your benefit *was (only) pointed out* at the end of the times." St. Peter is returning once more to the great argument of verses 10—12, "Do not treat your share in the gospel liberation as if it were, at best, a piece of good luck, and so learn to despise it. Neither think of it as if Paul and Silvanus were preaching to you a novel invention at discord with the spirit of the old covenant under which you were bred. God knew from all eternity who was to be His Messiah and His Lamb, but for your sakes the particular and personal declaration of Him was reserved till now. For you has been kept the revelation of a secret which underlay the whole

Old Testament system." The grammatical antecedent of the relative "who verily" is not "lamb," but "Christ;" and the word for "fore-ordained" is, literally, *foreknown*, only as in verse 2 (see Note), with the additional notion of coming to a decision. We see that St. Peter's doctrine has not changed since the great day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 23). The foreknowledge (as that passage would show) includes not only the knowledge and decision that Jesus should be the Christ, but that the Christ's history should be what it was; and this seems to involve not only the doctrine that the Incarnation was no mere episode, consequent upon the Fall of man, but also the doctrine that, "before the foundation of the world," God had foreknown, and predecided to allow the Fall itself. The same doctrine seems to be involved in Rev. xiii. 8, but only indirectly, because there the words "from the foundation of the world," are to be attached, not to the word "slain," but to the word "written."

Was manifest.—Better, *was manifested*, i.e., unambiguously shown, pointed out. The context shows that it does not simply mean the visible life of the Incarnate Word among men, as in 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 John iii. 5; but that the Messiah and Lamb of God was pointed out as being identical with the Man Jesus. And this was the work of John the Baptist, to say of the particular Person whom he saw walking by Jordan, "*Behold the Lamb.*" So St. John Baptist himself described his mission: "The

times for you, ⁽²¹⁾ who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from

the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

whole purpose of my coming was that He might be *manifested*, singled out and shown to Israel," as the Person round whom all their Messianic hopes were gathered (John i. 31.).

In these last times—*i.e.*, not merely "in modern times," "lately," but "at the end of the times," showing St. Peter's belief that the end of the world was not far distant. (Comp. once more Dan. xii. 4, 9, 13.) Almost exactly the same phrase is used in Heb. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 3.

⁽²¹⁾ **Who by him do believe in God.**—The sentence is joined on to the foregoing verse just as in verse 5, "Who are kept." The "who" might be rendered by "and you;" and the clause adds a kind of proof of the foregoing statement drawn from the result of God's manifestation of Christ to them. "This Christian doctrine is no innovation, nothing to lead you away from the God of our fathers. That same God had had the scheme in His thoughts from the beginning, and it is in that same God that you have been led thereby to believe." There is a better supported and more forcible reading, *Who through Him are faithful towards God*, which combines the ideas of believing, *i.e.*, putting the whole trust in God, and of loyal inward observance of Him. And if any one asks whether it be possible to say that Hebrew men only came to believe in God through the revelation of Christ, we must answer by pointing to the whole

scope of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and especially to Heb. iii. 12, where it is not faith in Christ, but faith in a living God, which they are warned not to abandon; and to Heb. vi. 1, where faith toward God is part of the "word of the beginning of Christ."

That raised him up.—These clauses give the historical facts which had led them, "through Christ," to a living faith in God. Though the thought is common with St. Paul (*e.g.*, Rom. i. 2—4), St. Peter was familiar with it years before St. Paul's conversion. See this in Acts ii. 23, 24; and verses 33—36 of the same chapter will show what he means by "gave Him glory"—not to be confined to the Ascension, though that is the prominent thought; the glory was already partly given in the Resurrection. Comp. John xvii. 1, where there is the same reciprocal glorification of the Father and the Son as here.

That your faith . . . might . . .—An inexact rendering which obscures the connection. Literally it is, *so that your faith and hope is in (or, toward) God*; that is to say, "Your faith and hope does not stop short in Jesus." Hammond seems to be quite right in paraphrasing, "Who by believing on Him (Jesus Christ) are far from departing from the God of Israel, but do, indeed, the more firmly believe and depend on Him as that omnipotent God who hath raised Christ from the dead." The co-equal Son is less than the Father (John xiv. 28);

(22) Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit

unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure

and we should terribly mistake the meaning of the gospel were we content to rest in the love of Christ Himself without accepting His revelation of the Father. This is the "living hope" of verse 3, brought about by Christ's resurrection. Some of the German commentators translate, "So that your faith may be also hope in God;" which has nothing ungrammatical in it, but does not suit the context so well.

(22) Purified your souls in obeying.—Bengel well points us to 2 Pet. i. 5—7, where, in like manner, St. Peter delights to exhibit gradations of grace. "Obeying the truth" here will correspond to "knowledge" there, with its immediate consequences of "self-mastery," "endurance," and "reverence;" after which we pass on to "love of the brethren," and thence, as to a higher grace, to "love" or "charity." On this last point see Note on 1 Thess. iv. 9. Perhaps the literal "in the obedience of the truth" (*i.e.*, the Christian gospel) does not exactly coincide with "obeying the truth," as implying rather "the obedience (to God) which the truth (*i.e.*, the knowledge of the truth) demands." Truth has a claim, not only to be accepted intellectually, as truth, but to alter moral conduct in accordance (*comp.* John xvii. 17): a doctrine which lies at the bottom of the Socratic maxim, "Virtue is knowledge." That Socratic maxim, however, does not sufficiently take into account the inertness of the will

to act on principle; and no doubt it was under some such instinct that some copyist first added as a gloss the words (not found in the original text) "through the Spirit." The first effect of such knowledge of the truth, under the Spirit's influence, is to "purify" the soul of selfish aims, and to give it that "altruism" (as it is called by a certain class of thinkers at the present day), or desire for the benefit of the community rather than self, which is here described as "love of the brethren." (See Notes on 1 Thess. iii. 13, and iv. 6.)

Unfeigned love of the brethren. — The epithet "unfeigned," in itself, would suggest that St. Peter was uneasy about the depth of their brotherly kindness. And the brotherly kindness is here, as usual, attachment to other members of the Church, special point being added to the word here because of the notion of regeneration running through the whole passage. (See verse 14.) Is it not possible that some coolness had arisen between the Jewish and Gentile members of the Church, and that St. Peter finds it necessary to remind the former that they are truly brethren, sons of one Father, and that they ought not only unaffectedly to have done with all jealousy of the Gentile members, but to be far beyond that, loving one another "from the heart (the word 'pure' is not part of the original text, and interrupts the run of the sentence), strenuously"?

heart fervently: ⁽²³⁾ being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of in-

a John 1.
13.
b Heb. 4.12
c Isa. 40.
6, 7, 8.
1 Or, For
that.

corruptible,^a by the word^b of God, which liveth^c and abideth for ever. ⁽²⁴⁾ For¹

⁽²³⁾ Being born again.—Rather, *Having been begotten again*. It is not part of the exhortation, as though they had still to be thus begotten, but assigns the moral grounds for the exhortation. It is logically parallel with “seeing ye have purified,” and might be rendered, *seeing that ye have been begotten again*. For the meaning of the word, refer back to verse 3.

Not of corruptible seed.—That is, *not of the seed of Abraham, but of the seed of God*. This is the argument: “You must learn not to be selfish, or arrogant, as being of the chosen race, but to have a true brotherly feeling and earnest love for the Gentile converts, and for those who, like St. Paul, are specially working for the Gentiles, because your inheritance of the promised ‘salvation’ is grounded, not on your Abrahamic descent, but on your spiritual regeneration, in which matter the Gentile converts are your equals.” That this was the doctrine of St. Peter is certain from his speech at the Council of Jerusalem, “God put no difference between us and them, having purified their hearts by faith;” and again, “It is only through the favour of the Lord Jesus that we hope to be saved, in precisely the same manner as they” (Acts xv. 9, 11). (Comp., for the argument, 1 John v. 1.)

By the word of God.—“Seed,” in the beginning of the clause, is more literally the act of sowing, or engendering, which sowing is carried on “through

the living and abiding word of God,” this “word of God” being the actual seed sown. The “seed” of all existence is the spoken Word of God, the expressed will and meaning of creative thought (Ps. xxxiii. 6); and so here, even when spoken mediately, through the lips of men (as explained in verse 25), it is that which begets men afresh. God creates afresh, though men speak the creative word for Him, just as “it is He that hath made us,” although He does so through natural laws and human powers. The “Word of God” here is, no doubt, the preaching of the Gospel, but, especially, as it would seem, the preaching of the Resurrection (verse 3), or of the sufferings and glories of Messiah (verse 12), the “truth” of the last verse. The part taken by “the Word” in the sacrament of regeneration may be seen again in Eph. v. 26 and Jas. i. 18; in connection with the other sacrament we may also refer to John vi. 63. “Incorruptible” (*i.e., imperishable*; see verses 4, 18) finds a more energetic paraphrase here in “living and abiding” (the words “for ever” not being part of the true text). The former epithet is a favourite with St. Peter (verse 3, chap. ii. 4, 5), and is perhaps borrowed from this place by the author to the Hebrews, in connection with the “word of God” (Heb. iv. 12). The epithets serve to prepare the way for the quotation.

⁽²⁴⁾ For all flesh is as grass.—The citation is from Isa. xl. 6—8,

all flesh is as grass, and all
the glory of man as the

flower of grass. The grass
withereth, and the flower

and varies between the Hebrew and the LXX. in the kind of way which shows that the writer was familiar with both. But the passage is by no means quoted only to support the assertion, in itself ordinary enough, that the Word of the Lord abideth for ever. It is always impossible to grasp the meaning of an Old Testament quotation in the mouth of a Hebrew without taking into account the context of the original. Nothing is commoner than to omit purposely the very words which contain the whole point of the quotation. Now these sentences in Isaiah stand in the forefront of the herald's proclamation of the return of God to Sion, always interpreted of the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. This proclamation of the Messianic kingdom comprises words which St. Peter has purposely omitted, and they contain the point of the quotation. The omitted words are, "the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely *the people*"—*i.e.*, Israel—"is grass." Immediately before our quotation went the words, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see it together;" statements which so shocked the LXX. translator that he entirely omitted verse 7, and changed the previous verse so as to make *some* difference between Jew and Gentile (as Godet points out on Luke iii. 6), into "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed," *i.e.*, to Israel, "and all flesh shall see *the salvation* of God." The comment of Bishop Lowth on the original passage will well bring

out what St. Peter means here: "What is the import of [the proclamation]? that the people, the flesh, is of a vain temporary nature; that all its glory fadeth, and is soon gone; but that the Word of God endureth for ever. What is this but a plain opposition of the flesh to the Spirit; of the carnal Israel to the spiritual; of the temporary Mosaic economy to the eternal Christian dispensation?" Here, then, St. Peter is quoting one of the greatest of Messianic prophecies; and his Hebrew readers would at once understand the Hebrew method of the quotation, and see that he was calling attention to the absolute equality of Jew and Gentile there proclaimed. Generation of the corruptible seed, physical descent from Abraham, was "the glory of the flesh" (observe that according to the best text St. Peter does *not* follow the LXX., and insert "of man," but follows the Hebrew, and says "all the glory thereof," *i.e.*, of the flesh). On this "the Spirit of the Lord" had breathed (Ps. civ. 30); and the merely fleshly glory had withered like grass. But "the word of our God," which, mark well, St. Peter purposely changes into "the Word of the Lord," *i.e.*, of Jesus Christ, incidentally showing his Hebrew readers that he believed Jesus Christ to be "our God"—this "abideth for ever." The engendering by *this* is imperishable, *i.e.*, involves a privilege which is not, like that of the Jewish blood, transitory: it will never become a matter of indifference whether we have been engendered with this, as is

thereof falleth away :
 (25) but the word of the
 Lord endureth for ever.
 And this is the word which
 by the Gospel is preached
 unto you.

A. D.
 cir. 60.

a Eph. 4.
 22; Col.
 3. 8;
 Jas. 1.
 21.

CHAPTER II. —

(1) Wherefore
 laying aside^a
 all malice,
 and all guile,
 and hypo-

Chap. ii. 1—10.
 The idea of the
 New Israel as
 seen in prophecy
 to be realised by
 them.

the case now (Gal. vi. 15) with regard to the "corruptible seed;" no further revelation will ever level up the unregenerate to be the equals of the regenerate. And in this regeneration "all flesh" share alike. The teaching of the Baptist, who fulfilled this prophecy, is here again apparent. (See Matt. iii. 9.)

(25) **The word which by the gospel is preached.**—An incorrect rendering of the original tense. It literally runs, *And this is the word which was preached unto you.* The whole magnificent peroration of this paragraph, as of the last, leads up to this: that, in the opinion of St. Peter, the Gospel, as delivered by St. Paul and his followers—the Gospel of equality, or rather of unity between Jew and Gentile in Jesus Christ—was the living and supreme abiding revelation of the will of God! Well may the Tübingen school wish to disprove the genuineness of this Epistle!

II.

(1—10) **EXHORTATION TO REALISE THE IDEA OF THE NEW ISRAEL.**—The Apostle bids them put away all elements of disunion, and to combine into a new Temple founded on Jesus as the Christ, and into a new hierarchy and theocracy.

(4) **Wherefore.**—That is, Because the Pauline teaching is correct which brings the Gentiles up

to the same level with the Jews. It may be observed that this newly enunciated principle is called by St. Peter in the previous verse of the last chapter, a "gospel," or piece of *good news*, for all parties.

Laying aside.—This implies that before they had been *wrapped up* in these sins. There had been "malice" (*i.e.*, ill will put into action) on the part of these Hebrew Christians against their Gentile brethren, and "guile," and "hypocrisies," and "jealousies," which are all instances of concealed malice. Of these three, the first plots, the second pretends not to plot, and the third rejoices to think of the plot succeeding. The word for "all evil speakings" is literally, *all talkings down*—this is, "malice" in word. Archbishop Leighton well says, "The Apostles sometimes name some of these evils, and sometimes other of them; but they are inseparable, all one garment, and all comprehended under that one word (Eph. iv. 22) 'the old man,' which the Apostle there exhorts to put off; and here it is pressed as a necessary evidence of this new birth, and furtherance of their spiritual growth, that these base habits be thrown away, ragged filthy habits, unbecoming the children of God." All these vices (natural vices to the Jewish mind) are contrasted with the "unfeigned (literally, *un-hypocritical*) brotherly kindness" of chap. i. 22.

crisies,^a and envies, and all evil speakings,⁽²⁾ as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk^b of the word,

^a ch. 1. 22.
^b 1 Cor. 3.
2; Heb.
5. 12

(²) **As newborn babes.**—The word “newborn” is, of course, newly, lately born, not born anew, although the birth meant is the new birth of chap. i. 23. They are said to be still but newborn because they are still so far from maturity in Christ, as these sins testified. The metaphor is said to be not uncommon in Rabbinical writers to denote proselytes. St. Peter would, therefore, be describing Jews who had newly received the word of God, as *proselytes* of the new Israel. “As” means “in keeping with your character of.” (Comp. chap. i. 14.)

Desire the sincere milk.—The word for “desire” here is a strong word—*get an appetite for it*. Bengel is perhaps right when he says on “newborn babes,” “It is their only occupation, so strong is their desire for it.” St. Peter here again seems to lend a thought to the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. v. 12—14). In both places Jewish Christians are beginning to rebel against the Gospel instructions, and in both places they are warned that they have not yet outgrown the need of the very simplest elements of the Gospel. The epithet “sincere” should have been rendered *guileless*, as it contains a contrast with “guile” in the verse before; perhaps the intention of the epithet may be to rebuke the attempt to deal deceitfully with the Old Testament Scriptures after the example of the Septuagint passage quoted above.

Of the word.—This translation of the original adjective cannot possibly be right. The only other

place in the New Testament where it is used, Rom. xii. 1, will show clearly enough its meaning here. There it is rendered, “your *reasonable* service”—i.e., not “the service which may be reasonably expected of you,” but “the ritual worship which is performed by the reason, not by the body.” So here, “the reasonable guileless milk” will mean “the guileless milk which is sucked in, not by the lips, but by the reason.” The metaphor of milk (though used by St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 2) was not so hackneyed as now; and the Apostle evidently wished to soften it a little, and explain it by calling it “mental milk,” just as (so Huther points out) he explained the metaphor in chap. i. 13, by adding “of your mind.” It is needless to add that the “mental milk” would, as a matter of fact, be “the milk of the word,” and that the Apostle is pressing his readers to cling with ardent attachment to the evangelical religion taught them by the Pauline party.

That ye may grow thereby.—All the best manuscripts and versions add the words “unto salvation,” which may confidently be adopted into the text. “Grow” is, of course, said in reference to the infant state of the converts as yet, and the maturity that is set before them (children long to be grown up) is spoken of as “salvation.” When we compare this with chap. i. 18, we see that the perfect emancipation from Jewish superstitions forms a main part of the “salvation” to which they are to grow up.

that ye may grow thereby : ^{a Ps. 34.} (3) if so be ye have tasted	that the Lord is gracious. ^a (4) To whom coming, as
--	---

(3) **If so be ye have tasted.**—The “if so be,” as elsewhere (2 Thess. i. 6, Note), constitutes a strong appeal to the readers to say whether it were not so. St. Peter confidently reckons that it is so. It should rather be *ye tasted*, looking back to a quite past time, probably that of the first conversion, when the taste of spiritual things is the most delicious. How sad to be past the relish for evangelical truth! The quotation, or rather adaptation, from Ps. xxxiv. 8 is, no doubt, suggested by the metaphor of “milk.” A curious little point about our translation here is that the word “gracious” has been adopted to suit the Prayer Book version of the Psalm. It is scarcely suitable to the Greek word, which, originally signifying “usable,” “serviceable,” passes on to be used of anything mild and pleasant, as, for instance, in Luke v. 39, of the mellowness of old wine. Here, therefore, the word seems to be peculiarly used with reference to the sense of taste. A more important point, doctrinally, is that St. Peter is here applying to Jesus Christ (as the next verse shows) a passage which otherwise we might not have thought of applying to Him in particular. It gives quite a new complexion to the 34th Psalm, when we see that in St. Peter’s view the Psalmist was speaking prophetically of our Lord. We shall find him quoting the same Psalm in the same sense again in chap. iii. 10.

(4) **To whom coming.**—The word used is that which gives rise to the name of a “proselyte.” (Comp. Note on verse 2.) It is

also strangely used in something of the same sense in 1 Tim. vi. 3. “Joining Him therefore as proselytes.” Not that St. Peter has any notion of a mere external accession. The Apostolic writers do not contemplate the possibility of a difference between the visible and invisible Church. From this point the regeneration-idea, which coloured the whole of the preceding portion of the Epistle, suddenly disappears. The thought is no longer that of a spiritual seed instead of a carnal seed, but of a spiritual temple instead of the stone temple at Jerusalem.

A living stone.—The very structure and order of the sentence puts Jesus Christ first. Foundation first, building afterwards. It is a pity to insert “as unto” with our version; it takes off from the striking, attracting effect of the sudden metaphor. St. Peter is fond of explaining his metaphors—*e.g.*, “inheritance . . . in heaven,” “tested genuineness . . . more precious than of gold,” “gird up . . . loins of your minds:” so here, “living stone.” It is more than doubtful whether St. Peter, in what follows, had before his mind the giving of his own surname. The word which he here uses is neither *petros*, nor *petra*, but *lithos*; and indeed the whole idea of the relative position of the Church to the *petra* and to the *lithos* is quite different. Neither *petros* nor *petra* could possibly be used of the squared wrought stone, but represent the native rocky unhewn substratum—part, or whole—which pre-exists before any

unto a living stone, dis- | but chosen of God, and
 allowed indeed of men,^a | precious,⁽⁵⁾ ye also, as

a Ps. 118,
 22.

building is begun, even before the "chief corner-stone" would be placed. (Comp. Matt. vii. 24.) Here, therefore, the idea is quite different: the substratum is not thought of at all; and Jesus Christ is a carefully selected and hewn stone (*lithos*), specially laid as the first act in the work of building. The only thing, therefore, which is, in fact, common to the two passages is the simple thought of the Christian Church being like a building. Our present verse gives us no direct help towards finding how St. Peter understood the famous name-passage. All we can say for certain is that he did not so interpret it as to suppose an official connection with his own person to be the one essential of the true Church, or else in again using the metaphor of building the Church (though in a different connection) he could hardly have omitted all mention of himself. He is, apparently, thinking only of the Messianic interpretation of Old Testament sayings as expounded by our Lord—the "unsophisticated milk of the word" of verse 2.

Disallowed indeed of men.

—A direct reference to the passage (Ps. cxviii. 22), which is quoted below in verse 7. It here says "men," rather than "builders," in order to contrast them more forcibly with God. The word "disallowed," or "rejected," implies a form of trial or probation which comes to an unsatisfactory conclusion. The human builders examine the stone, inspect all its qualifications, and find it unsuited to the edifice which they have in

hand, and refuse it not only the place of honour, but any place at all, in their architecture. St. Peter wishes to bring out strongly the absolute opposition between God and the Jews.

But chosen of God, and precious.—Literally, *but with God elect, honoured*. This is a direct allusion to the passage, Isa. xxviii. 16, which is quoted in verse 6. While the human builders saw the qualities of the stone, and rejected it because of its not fitting in with their ideal, on the other hand, "with God," *i.e.*, in God's counsel and plan, it was "elect," *i.e.*, choice had been laid upon it, it had been selected for God's building purposes; and not only "elect" (for this might be equally said of all the "living stones;" see chap. i. 2, where the word has precisely the same meaning), but also "honoured," which is further explained to mean, singled out for the place of honour, *i.e.*, for that of corner-stone. The designation of this stone as "elect," brings out again what we have had in chap. i. 11, 20, *viz.*, the eternal predestination of Jesus to the Messiahship.

⁽⁵⁾ **Ye also, as lively stones, are built up.**—This is true enough: they *were* in process of building up; but it suits the hortatory character of the whole Epistle better to take it (the one is as grammatical as the other) in the *imperative* sense: *Be ye also as living stones built up*. The rendering "lively," instead of "living," as in verse 4, is arbitrary, the Greek being precisely the same, and the intention being to show the com-

lively stones, are¹ built up ^{1 Or, be ye built.} a spiritual house,^a an holy ^{a 1 Cor. 3. 9; b Isa. 61. 6; 66. 21.} priesthood,^b to offer up spiritual sacrifices, accept-

plete conformation of the believers to Him who is the type and model for humanity. "Built up," too, only expresses a part of the Greek word, which implies "built up upon Him."

A spiritual house.—The epistle is supplied, just as in "*living stone*," to make it abundantly clear that the language is figurative. In the first three verses of the chapter these Hebrew Christians were treated *individually*, as so many babes, to grow up into an ideal *freedom of soul*: here they are treated *collectively* (of course, along with the Gentile Christians), as so many stones, incomplete and unmeaning in themselves, by arrangement and cemented union to rise into an ideal *house of God*. St. Peter does not distinctly say that the "house" is a temple (for the word "spiritual" is only the opposite of "material"), but the context makes it plain that such is the case. The temple is, however, regarded not in its capacity of a place for *worship* so much as a place for *Divine inhabitation*. "The spiritual house," says Leighton truly, "is the palace of the Great King. The Hebrew word for *palace* and *temple* is one." And the reason for introducing this figure seems to be, to console the Hebrews for their vanishing privileges in the temple at Jerusalem. They are being taught to recognise that they themselves, in their union with one another, and with Jesus Christ, are the true abode of the Most High. The Christian substitution of something else in lieu of the Jerusalem

Temple was one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to the Hebrews from the very first. (See Mark xiv. 58; John ii. 21; Acts vii. 48; xxi. 28; compare also Heb. ix. 8, 11.) All history is the process of building up a "spiritual palace" out of a regenerate humanity, in order that, in the end, the *Father Himself* may occupy it. This follows from the fact that the Incarnate *Son* is described as a *part* of the Temple. Even through the Incarnation—at least so far as it has as yet taken effect—creation has not become so completely pervaded and filled with the Deity as it is destined to be when the "palace" is finished. (See 1 Cor. xv. 28.) The idea of the Eternal Son occupying such a relation to the Father on the one hand, and to humanity and creation on the other hand, is really the same as when He is called (by an entirely different metaphor) the "firstborn of all creation" (Col. i. 15).

An holy priesthood.—"Being *living stones*," says Bengel, "they can be priests as well." They not only *compose* the Temple, but minister in it. By becoming Christians they are cut off from neither Temple nor hierarchy, nor sacrifice; all are at hand, and they themselves are all. The old priesthood, like the old Temple, has "had its day, and ceased to be." Mark, though, that the Apostle is not dwelling on the individual priesthood of each (though that is involved), but on the hierarchical order of the whole company of Christians: they are an organised

able to God by Jesus Christ. ⁽⁶⁾ Wherefore also ^{a Isa. 28. 16.} it is contained in the scripture, ^a Behold, I lay in

body or college of priests, a new seed of Aaron or Levi. (See Isa. lxvi. 21.) The very word implies that all Christians have not an equal *degree* of priesthood. And this new priesthood, like the old, is no profane intruding priesthood like that of Core (Jude 11), but "holy"—*i.e.*, consecrated, validly admitted to its work. The way in which this new metaphor is suddenly introduced,— "to *whom* coming, be built up *upon Him* . . . to be an holy priesthood," implies that Jesus Christ is the High Priest quite as much as it implies His being Corner Stone. The Incarnate Son heads the adoration offered to the Father by creation, just as He binds creation into a palace for the Father's indwelling.

To offer up spiritual sacrifices.—The new priesthood is not merely nominal; it is no sinecure. None is a priest who does not offer sacrifices (Heb. viii. 3). But the sacrifices of the new hierarchy are "spiritual"—*i.e.*, not material, not sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs. What, then, do the sacrifices consist of? If our priesthood is modelled on that of Jesus Christ, as is here implied, it consists mainly (Calvin points this out) of the sacrifice of *self*, of the *will*; then, in a minor degree, of words and acts of worship, thanks and praise. (See Heb. xiii. 10—16.) But in order to constitute a true priesthood and true sacrifices after the model of Jesus Christ, these sacrifices are offered up on behalf of others. (See Heb. v. 1, and 1 John iii. 16.) The first notion of the priesthood of all believers is not

that of a mediatorial system being abolished, but of the mediatorial system being extended: whereas, before, only Aaron's sons were recognised as mediators and intercessors, now all Israel, all the spiritual Israel, all men everywhere are called to be mediators and intercessors between each other and God.

By (or, through) Jesus Christ.—The *name* again, not the title only. We all help one another to present one another's prayers and praises, which pass through the lips of many priests; but for them to be acceptable, they must be presented finally through the lips of the Great High Priest. He, in His perfect sympathy with all men, must make the sacrifice His own. We must unite our sacrifices with His—the Advocate with the Father, the Propitiation for our sins—or our sacrifice will be as irregular and offensive as though some Canaanite should have taken upon himself to intrude into the Holy of Holies on Atonement Day. (See Heb. x. 19—25, especially verse 21.)

⁽⁶⁾ **Wherefore also.**—The mention of Jesus Christ brings the writer back again to his theme, *viz.*, that the whole system to which his readers belong has undergone a radical change, and is based on Jesus and His fulfilment of the sufferings and glories of the Messiah. The right reading here is not "wherefore also," but *because*—*i.e.*, the quotations are introduced in the same way as in chap. i. 16 and 24, as justifying the foregoing expressions.

Sion a chief corner stone, | elect, precious: and he

It is contained in the scripture.—In the original the phrase is a curious one. "The scripture" never means the Old Testament as a whole, which would be called "the Scriptures," but is always the particular book or passage of the Old Testament. Literally, then, our present phrase runs, *because it encloses or contains in that passage*. Thus attention is drawn to the context of the quotation, and in this context we shall again find what made St. Peter quote the text.

Behold, I lay.—The sentence is taken from Isa. xxviii. 16, and, like the last, is adapted to the occasion out of both Hebrew and LXX. Gesenius on that passage gives evidence to show that the early Jewish explanation, current in our Lord's time, referred it to the Messiah; the latter Rabbinical expositors, probably by way of opposition to the Christians, explained it to mean Hezekiah. In order to gain a clear conception of St. Peter's aim in the quotation, it is necessary to glance over the whole section contained in the 28th and 29th chapters of Isaiah. "The prophecy here cited," says Archbishop Leighton, "if we look upon it in its own place, we shall find inserted in the middle of a very sad denunciation of judgment against the Jews." Besides our present text, which is quoted also in Rom. ix. 33, our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is an amplification of Isa. xxix. 3, 4; His sharp censure of the corrupt traditions which had superseded the law of God (Matt. xv. 7—9) is taken from Isa. xxix. 13; St. Paul's image

of the potter changing his purpose with the lump of clay (Rom. ix. 21), comes from Isa. xxix. 16. Like one bright spot in the sad picture appears our verse, but only as serving to heighten the general gloom. St. Peter's quotation here, therefore, calling attention as it does to the context, is at least as much intended to show his Hebrew readers the sweeping away of the carnal Israel as to encourage them in their Christian allegiance. In the original passage the sure foundation is contrasted with the refuge of lies which the Jewish rulers had constructed for themselves against Assyria, "scorning" this sure foundation as a piece of antiquated and unpractical religionism. Nägelsbach (in his new commentary on Isaiah) seems to be right in interpreting the "refuge of lies" to mean the diplomatic skill with which Ahaz and the Jewish authorities flattered themselves their treaty with Egypt was drawn up, and the "sure foundation" opposed to it is primarily God's plighted promise to the house of David, in which all who trusted would have no cause for flight. In the Messianic fulfilment, those promises are all summed up in the one person of Jesus Christ (Acts xiii. 33; 2 Cor. i. 20); and the "refuge of lies" in which the Jewish rulers had trusted was the wicked policy by which they had tried to secure their "place and nation" against the Romans (John xi. 48).

In Sion.—In Isaiah it means that the people have not to look for any distant external aid, such as that of Pharaoh: all that they need is to be found in the city of

that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ⁽⁷⁾ Unto you therefore which be-	¹ Or, <i>an honour.</i>	believe <i>he is</i> precious: ¹ but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which
--	------------------------------------	---

David itself. Here, it seems to impress upon the Hebrew Christians that they are not abandoning their position as Hebrews by attaching themselves to Jesus Christ. It is they who are really clinging to Sion when the other Jews are abandoning her.

Shall not be confounded

(or, *ashamed*).—Our version of Isaiah translates the Hebrew original by the unintelligible “shall not make haste.” It really means, *shall not flee*. While all the Jewish rulers, who had turned faithless and trusted in their *finesse* with Egypt, would have to flee from the face of the Assyrians, those who preserved their faith in God would be able to stand their ground. This, of course, did not come literally true in the first instance, where a common temporal overthrow came upon faithful and faithless alike, from Babylon, though not from Assyria. In the Messianic fulfilment, however, the faith or unbelief of the individual makes all the difference to him: the overthrow of the many does not affect the few. St. Peter adds to “believe” the words “on Him” or “on it,” which are found in neither the Hebrew nor the Greek of Isaiah, such an addition being quite in keeping with the Rabbinic method of quotation, which frequently alters words (comp. Matt. ii. 6) to bring out the concealed intention more fully. The general quality of “faith” of which the prophet spoke, *i.e.*, reliance on the promises of God, becomes faith in Him in whom the

promises are fulfilled. For a like cause St. Peter prefers the LXX. “be ashamed” to the Hebrew “flee away,” there being (except at the Fall of Jerusalem) no opportunity for actual flight. It comes to the same thing in the end: “shall not find his confidence misplaced.”

⁽⁷⁾ **He is precious.**—Rather, *Unto you therefore, the believers, belongs the honour*. So said in reference to His being called “a stone elect, *honoured*,” taken in conjunction with “shall not be ashamed.” Both the Hebrew and the Greek word rendered “precious” may with equal propriety be translated “honoured,” and this contrasts better with the “shame” just spoken of. Thus Dr. Lightfoot takes it. The argument is this: “God has selected Jesus for special honour, and has promised that all who trust in Him, instead of scorning Him like the Jewish rulers, shall have no cause to blush. Now *you do* trust in Him, therefore to you belongs the promise, and the honour bestowed by God on Him reflects on you. You, like Him, are made parts of the divine imperishable architecture.”

Unto them which be disobedient.—The better reading is, *Unto them which disbelieve*: the other word being an importation from verse 8. The true reading better preserves the contrast with “you that believe.”

The stone which the builders disallowed.—We should perhaps have rather expected the

the builders disallowed, the | same is made the head of

sentence to run more like this: "To you which believe belongs the honour, but to those who disbelieve belongs the shame from which you are secured." But instead, the Apostle stops short, and inserts (by a quotation) the historical fact which *brought* the shame, viz., the disappointment of their own design, and the glorious completion of that which they opposed. The words which follow are quoted directly from the LXX., and properly represent the Hebrew. Almost all the best modern critics consider the Psalm from which this verse is cited to be a late Psalm, written subsequent to the return from Babylon, in which case it is most probable that the composer was directly thinking of the prophecy of Isaiah above quoted. The Messianic interpretation of the Psalm would be no novelty to the Hebrews who received this Epistle (see Matt. xxi. 9), though probably they had not perceived it in its fulness. In its first application the passage seems to mean as follows: The speaker is Israel, taken as a single person. He has been a despised captive. The great builders of the world—the Babylonian and Persian empires—had recognised no greatness in him, and had no intention of advancing him; they were engaged in aggrandisement of self alone. Yet, after all, Israel is firmly planted once more in Sion, to be the first stone of a new structure, a new empire. Thus this interpretation at once suggests the admission of the Gentiles, humanity at large, into the architecture. Israel is the corner-stone, but corner-stones are not laid to be left un-

built upon. In the fulfilment Christ takes the place of Israel, as is the case with Isa. liii. The builders are the rulers of the Jews. In Acts iv. 11 our author had called the Sanhedrin to their face, "you builders." They, like the kings of Babylon, had been intent on building a fabric of their own, and had despised Jesus, yet, without any intention of so doing, had been the means of advancing Him (Acts iv. 27, 28). He had been made the basis of a new spiritual structure, in which faith, not fleshly lineage, was the cement and bond; and the believing Israelites, united to Him in both ways, shared the honour of being corner-stone. A further point is given to the quotation if we suppose, with Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, and others, that the remembrance of Isaiah's prophecy of the "corner-stone" was suggested to the original Psalmist by the works of the Second Temple, then begun, advancing, or fresh completed. It will then fit in more perfectly with the description of the "spiritual house." Leighton well points out how sore a trial it must have been to the faith of Jewish Christians to see that their own chosen people, even the most learned of them, rejected Christ, and adds, "That they may know this makes nothing against Him, nor ought to invalidate their faith at all, but rather testifies with Christ, and so serves to confirm them in believing, the Apostle makes use of those prophetic scriptures that foretell the unbelief and contempt with which the most would entertain Christ."

the corner,^{a (3)} and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,^b *even to them which*

^a Ps. 118.
22;
Matt.
21. 42;
Acts 4.
11.

^b Isa. 8.
14. c1 Thess. 5. 9.

stumble at the word, being disobedient: *whereunto also they were appointed.*^c

(3) **And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.**—Another quotation, no doubt suggested by the word “a stone,” but conveying a totally different metaphor. Here there is no thought whatever of the stone as a material for building; the thought is that of a mass of rock on the road, on which the terror-stricken fugitives stumble and fall. The words are taken from Isa. viii. 14, and are translated directly from the Hebrew. The LXX. not only makes nonsense, but can again be hardly acquitted of “guile” (verse 1) in its endeavour to make out the best possible case for Israel by deliberately inserting the word “not” twice over. We shall find St. Peter in chap. iii. 14 quoting the verses which immediately precede our present citation, and again the point lies in the context. The words are no mere phrase hastily caught up to serve the turn. They come out of the great Immanuel section of Isaiah, and immediately involve, like the quotation in verse 6, the sharp contrast between the Jews who trust in Immanuel (the presence of God with Israel) and the Jews who do not, but rely on “confederacies.” To the one party, the Lord of Hosts will be “for a sanctuary;” but to the other party, who are described as “both houses of Israel,” and specially as the “inhabitant of Jerusalem,” He will be “for a stone of striking, and for a rock of stumbling over,” and also “for a snare.” The “sanctuary” does not seem to mean a temple

(though this would connect it with the preceding words of St. Peter), but rather such a “sanctuary” as that of Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 18), a consecrated stone to which a man might flee as an asylum. In the flight of terror before the face of the Assyrians the very stone which afforded right of sanctuary to those who recognised and trusted it, was a vexatious and dangerous obstacle, a trap full in the way to those who did not. Once more, therefore, the Hebrews of the Dispersion, in separating themselves from “both houses of Israel” and the “inhabitant of Jerusalem,” were obeying the warnings of the Immanuel prophecy, which every Hebrew recognised as Messianic. Though the coupling of these passages of the Old Testament together certainly seems to show traces of the influence of St. Paul (comp. Rom. ix. 32, 33), yet St. Peter must have been present and heard “the Lord of Hosts” Himself put them together (Luke xx. 17, 18), and probably St. Paul’s use of the passages is itself to be traced back to the same origin.

Stumble at the word, being disobedient.—It seems better to arrange the words otherwise: *which stumble, being disobedient to the word.* The participle thus explains the verb. “‘A stone of stumbling’ He is to them; and the manner of the stumbling is in being disobedient to the gospel preaching” (Leighton).

(⁹) But ye are a chosen generation,^a a royal priest-^b hood,^b an holy nation, a peculiar people;^{1 c} that ye

a Deut. 10. 15.
b Ex. 19. 6.
1 Or, a
priest-
hood
c Deut. 14. 2.

Whereunto also they were appointed—*i.e.*, unto stumbling. The present commentator believes that when St. Peter says that these unhappy Jews were appointed to stumble, he primarily means that the clear prophecies of the Old Testament which he has quoted marked them for such a destiny. It was no unforeseen, accidental consequence of the gospel. It had never been expected that all who heard the gospel would accept it. Those who stumbled by disbelief were marked out in prophecy as men who would stumble. Thus the introduction of the statement here has the direct practical purpose of confirming the faith of the readers by showing the verification of the prophecy. Still, in fairness, we must not shirk the further question which undoubtedly comes in at this point. Even though the moment of their appointment to stumble was that of the utterance of the prophecy, it cannot be denied that, in a certain sense, it was God Himself who appointed them to stumble. It will be observed, however, from the outset, that our present passage casts not a glance at the condition of the stumbling Jews *after death*. With this caution, we may say that God puts men sometimes into positions where, during this life, they almost inevitably reject the truth. This is implied in the very doctrine of election—*e.g.*, in 2 Thess. ii. 13, where, if God selects one man out of the hundred to a present salvation through belief of truth, it seems to follow logically that the

ninety and nine are appointed to have no share in that salvation, so far as this life is concerned, through disbelief of truth. These things remain as a trial of faith. It suffices that we know for certain that God is Love. He has "brought us forth at His own option by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18). We have but to prize more highly our own present salvation, and to trust His love for that fuller harvest of which we are but the firstfruits. In some way even their stumbling will ultimately prove His love, to them as well as to us.

(⁹) **But ye.**—Like St. Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 13, St. Peter turns with an outburst of triumph to the happier and more practical and attractive theme. All the most splendid titles of the old Israel belong in a fuller sense to these Hebrews who have joined the new Israel. In verse 5 they are bidden to aim at being what here they are said to be. (Comp. Col. iii. 3, 5.)

A chosen generation.—Better, *a chosen, or elect race*. As originally the clan of Abraham was selected from among "all the families of the earth" (Amos iii. 2), so out of the clan of Abraham after the flesh were these men selected to be a new clan, or race. They are not merely individuals selected one by one and left in isolation, but a tribe consolidated, only the bond henceforth is not merely one of common physical descent.

A royal priesthood, an holy nation.—These words are a direct quotation from Ex. xix. 6, accord-

should shew forth the praises ¹ of him who hath	¹ Or, virtues.	called you out of darkness into his marvellous light :
--	---------------------------	--

ing to the LXX. version. The Hebrew has "a kingdom of priests," as in Rev. i. 6 (according to the best reading); which would mean God's organised empire, every member of which is a priest. Nor is the thought far different here. The word "royal" does not seem intended to imply that every Christian is a king, or of royal birth (though that, of course, may be shown from elsewhere), but describes His *belonging* to the King as we might speak of the royal apartments, the royal borough, the royal establishment, or even of the royal servants. The substitution, therefore, of "royal priesthood" for "kingdom of priests" brings out more clearly the personal relation to the Personal King. But if the writer had said "royal priests," the notion of organisation would have slipped out of sight altogether. By way of compensation, therefore, it is restored in the substitution of "priesthood" (see Note on verse 5) instead of "priests." This, and the next phrase, "an holy (*i.e.*, consecrated) nation," describe the whole Israelite nation as they stood beneath Mount Sinai. This must be taken into consideration in dealing with the doctrine of the Christian ministry. The sacerdotal office was as common to all Israelites under the Law as it is to all the new Israel under the Gospel.

A peculiar people.—This curious phrase is literally, *a people for a special reservation*. It is, no doubt, intended to represent Ex. xix. 5, though it differs both from the Greek and the Hebrew, the variation being due to a recollec-

tion of the Greek of two other passages of the Old Testament (Isa. xliii. 21; Mal. iii. 17). The word rendered "peculiar" means properly "making over and above," and would be represented in Latin by the word *peculium*, which means a man's private pocket-money, as, for instance, the money a slave could make by working over hours, or such as a wife might have apart from her husband. When children speak of a thing being their "very own" it exactly expresses what we have here. From this sense of "making over and above," by working out of hours, the word comes in other places to mean "earning by hard work," in such a way as to establish peculiar rights of property over the thing earned. So in Acts xx. 28, where St. Paul is probably thinking of the passage of Isaiah above referred to, both the hard earning and the special possession are intended: "the Church of God, which He won so hard for His very own, by His own blood." Here, perhaps, the thought of "earning" is less obvious, and it means "a people to be His very own." Comp. 1 Thess. v. 9, and Eph. i. 7, where (according to Dr. Lightfoot) it means "for a redemption which consists of taking possession of us for His own."

That ye should shew forth the praises.—This is an adaptation, though not exactly according to the LXX., of Isa. xliii. 21, which passage is brought to St. Peter's mind by the word rendered "peculiar." The word "praises" is put here in accordance with the English

(10) which in time past *were* ^{a Hos. 2. 23; Rom. 9. 26.} the people of God : which not a people,^a but *are now* had not obtained mercy

version there. The Greek means "virtues," or "powers," or "excellencies," a rare word in the New Testament (see 2 Pet. i. 3). And the word for "shew forth," which is nowhere else found in the New Testament, means by rights "to proclaim to those without what has taken place within." This strict signification is very suitable here. St. Peter says that God has taken us from a people peculiarly near to Him, and the purpose is, not that we may stand within His courts and praise Him, but that we may carry to others the tidings of what we have been admitted to see. This was the true function of the old Israel, "Do My prophets no harm" (Ps. cv. 15). They were not elect for their own sake, but to act as God's exponents to the world. This function they abdicated by their selfish exclusiveness, and it has descended to the new Israel. St. Peter and St. Paul are at one.

Of him who hath called you out of darkness.—This is to be understood of the Father, not of Christ. For one thing, the act of calling is almost always ascribed in the New Testament to God Himself; and for another thing it is probable that St. Peter regards our Lord as Head of this "people of God," just as He is corner-stone of the Temple, and High Priest of the hierarchy. The act of calling (literally it is, *who called*, not "who hath called") was that of sending the preachers of the gospel to them, *i.e.*, St. Paul and his followers (comp. chap. i. 12, 25). Here again, then, we have St. Peter

speaking in praise of St. Paul's mission, and, indeed, speaking in the same tones of unbounded admiration: "His marvellous light." But could Hebrew Christians be said to have gone through so great a change in becoming believers? Had they been in "darkness?" We may answer that St. Peter's use of the word "marvellous" is no affectation of sympathy. He himself found the change to be what he here describes, therefore there is no difficulty in supposing that other Hebrews should have found it so too. Besides which, the state of the Jews immediately before Christ and without Him is often described as "darkness." (See Matt. iv. 16; Luke i. 79.) This very passage is quoted a few years later by St. Clement of Rome (chap. xxxvi.), as applying to himself among others, and Dr. Lightfoot has clearly established that St. Clement was a Jew.

(10) Which in time past were not a people.—Here at last, say some, we have a distinct proof that the Epistle was written to the Gentiles only, or, at least, to churches which contained a very small proportion of Jews. Such, however, is by no means the case; in fact, the opposite. We have here an emphasised adaptation of Hos. ii. 23, "And I will have mercy upon Lo-ruhamah, and I will say to Lo-ammi, 'Thou art Ammi,' *i.e.*, My people." Now who were Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi? Types of Israel left unpitied, and rejected from their covenant with God. And this unpitied and rejected Israel, after

but now have obtained
mercy.

a ch. 1.
17.

(11) Dearly beloved, I
beseech *you* as strangers^a

being "scattered," or *sown*, all over the earth, was to be restored again to favour, together with the increment of the Gentiles who joined it as the result of the "sowing." St. Peter means, then, that in his Hebrew readers and brethren from among the Gentiles, who by the gospel of St. Paul had adhered to them, this promise given by Hosea had found its fulfilment. But, as usual, the quotation demands a more searching scrutiny of the context from which it is taken. The name *Diaspora*, or Dispersion, by which St. Peter, in chap. i. 1, designates those to whom he writes, was applied to themselves by the Jews in direct allusion (as seems probable) to the name Jezreel, or *God will scatter*, in Hos. i. 4. Now mark that St. Peter does not say, "Which in time past were not God's people," but "were not *a* people." This was the effect of the dispersion, or "scattering." Though each Jew of the dispersion retained, and still retains, in isolation, his national characteristics and aspirations, yet their unity—that which made them a "people"—was, and is, for the time broken. The Hebrews had not only ceased to be in covenant as "God's people," but had ceased to be "*a* people" at all. But in Christ that very "scattering" becomes a "*sowing*" (Hos. ii. 23), for the name Jezreel means both equally; their very dispersion becomes the means of their multiplication by union with the Gentiles in Christ, and thus spiritually they recover the lost unity, and become once more a solid and well-governed confeder-

tion, *i.e.*, "a people," and that "the people of God." (See John xi. 52, and Dr. Pusey's notes on Hosea.) It is a mistake to take St. Paul's quotation of this passage in Rom. ix. 26, as if it referred solely to the Gentiles; for he expressly affirms that the title "My people" belongs to neither section exclusively, but to both in re-union—"us whom He called, *not only* of the Jews, but *also* of the Gentiles."

PRUDENTIAL RULES OF CONDUCT IN VIEW OF THE HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF THE HEATHEN. — As slanders against the Christian name are rife, and bringing practical persecution on the Church, they are exhorted to extreme care about their conduct, especially in regard (1) to purity, and (2) to due subordination, whether as subjects to the officers of state, or as slaves to their masters, or as wives to their husbands (chaps. ii. 11—iii. 12.)

(11) Dearly beloved.—"Affectionate and pressing exhortation," says Bengel. "That which is known to come from love," says Leighton, "cannot readily but be so received too, and it is thus expressed for that very purpose, that the request may be the more welcome. *Beloved*, it is the advice of a friend, one that truly loves you, and aims at nothing but your good; it is because I love you that I intreat you, and intreat you, as you love yourselves, to abstain from fleshly lusts."

As strangers and pilgrims. —The exhortation will be felt with

and pilgrims, abstain from | fleshly lusts, which war

the more force if we turn to the Psalm from which St. Peter draws the phrase (Ps. xxxix. 12, LXX.). The words, especially when compared with that Psalm, prepare for the description of distress which is to follow. (Comp. also Ps. cxix. 19.) The word "pilgrim" (which comes to us through the French form *pèlerin*, from the Latin *peregrinus*) does not originally, or in this place, mean one *on a pilgrimage*. It implies no journeying, but simply residence in a foreign country. Here it represents the same Greek word which is rendered "strangers" in chap. i. 1, but is used in a metaphorical and not literal sense. Though no longer "scattered," but gathered mercifully once more into "a people," they were still far from home—unprotected residents in an alien and hostile world, which scrutinised their conduct and was anxious for an opportunity to get rid of them.

Abstain from fleshly lusts.

—First prudential rule. Although *all* bad desires might be described as fleshly, the word seems here to mean what we usually understand by it, the lusts which lead to drunkenness, gluttony, and uncleanness. And though such sins are usually characteristic of the Gentile, not of the Jew, yet see our Note on chap. i. 14. Jews were not impeccable in such matters, and here the Apostle has a special reason for insisting on the observance of the seventh commandment. It may even be said that his mode of insistence recognises that his readers usually do observe it. He appeals to them as "Israelites from home" to be on their guard in

such matters, as Leonidas might exhort Spartans going into battle not to flinch, or Nelson tell English sailors that "England expects every man to do his duty." There was special reason for these Hebrew Christians to be more than ever vigilant, because (see Note on next verse) of the calumnies which the heathen were beginning to circulate about the Christians.

Which war against the soul.—This clause is no specifying of the particular fleshly lusts to be guarded against, as though there were some of them which did *not* war against the soul; but it is a description of the way in which all fleshly lusts alike act. It means not merely a general antagonism between soul and body, but that the lusts are *on active service*, engaged in a definite campaign against the immortal part of the man. St. Peter has probably forgotten for the moment his metaphor of strangers and sojourners, and we are not to put the two things together too closely, as though their position of strangers rendered them more liable to the attack of the hostile lusts. "Abstain" cannot mean merely "be on your guard against." It runs rather thus: "You Christian Jews are dwelling as sojourners in the midst of jealous Gentile foreigners, and must, therefore, be particularly observant of moral conduct; for though I know that you usually are so, yet the fleshly appetites are actively engaged against your soul all the time; and if you should in any degree let them get the better of you, the heathen neighbours will at once take advantage of you."

against the soul ;^{a (12)} having

Chap. ii. 11— your conver-
25. The present sation honest
crisis needs vigi- among the
lant purity of Gentiles: that,
ife.

^a Rom.
7. 23 ;
Jas. 4.
1.
¹ Or,
wherein.
^b ch. 3.
16.
^c Matt.
5. 16.

whereas¹ they speak against
you as evildoers,^b they may
by *your* good works, which
they shall behold, glorify
God^c in the day of visita-

As the expression might have been drawn equally well from St. Paul or from St. James, it is perhaps the easiest thing to suppose that (like the metaphors of building or of giving milk) it was part of the common property of Christians, and not consciously traceable to any originator.

(12) **Conversation.**—A favourite word with St. Peter, occurring (substantive and verb) seven times in this Epistle, and thrice in the second—*i.e.*, as often as in all the other New Testament writings put together. It means the visible conduct of the daily walk in life. This, as among Gentiles—*i.e.*, heathen (the words are synonymous, though St. Paul generally says “those without” when he means heathen as opposed to Christian)—is to be “honest.” We have no word adequate to represent this charming adjective. It is rendered “good” immediately below and in John x. 11 (“the *Good Shepherd*”), “worthy” in Jas. ii. 7, “goodly” in Luke xxi. 5. But it is the ordinary Greek word for “beautiful,” and implies the attractiveness of the sight, the satisfaction afforded by an approach to ideal excellence.

That whereas.—The marginal version is more literal, and in sense perhaps preferable, “wherein.” It means that the very fact of the heathen having slandered them will make their testimony “in the day of visitation” all the more striking,

as (by way of illustration) the doubts of St. Thomas tend to “the more confirmation of the faith.” So in Rom. ii. 1, “wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself;” or Heb. ii. 18 (lit.), “*wherein* He Himself hath suffered, being tempted.”

They speak against you as evildoers.—A significant phrase. St. Peter asserts distinctly that calumnies were really rife, about some particulars of the Christian morality, at the time that this letter was written. It is a mark of a late date, for at first the Christians had not attracted sufficient notice, as a body, to be talked of either in praise or blame. The heathen at first regarded them as merely a Jewish sect (Acts xviii. 15; xxv. 18–20), and as such they received from the Roman Government a contemptuous toleration. The first state recognition of Christianity as a separate religion, with characteristics of its own, was the *Persecution of Nero* in the year 64. Now, it so happens that we have almost contemporary heathen documents which bring out the force of this passage. Suetonius, in his life of Nero (chap. 16), calls the Christians by the very name St. Peter uses, “the Christians, a kind of men of a new and *malefic* superstition.” Only about forty years later, we have Pliny’s famous letter to Trajan, written actually from the country in which St. Peter’s correspondents lived, and referring to some of the

tion. ⁽¹³⁾ Submit yourselves ^{a Rom. 13. 1.} to every ordinance of man | for the Lord's sake: ^a whether it be to the king,

very persons (probably) who received the Epistle as having apostatised at the time of the persecution under Nero; in which letter Pliny asks whether it is the profession of being a Christian which is itself to be punished, or "the crimes which attach to that profession!" The Apologists of the second century are full of refutations of the lies current about the immorality of the Christian assemblies. The Christians were a secret society, and held their meetings before daylight; and the heathen, partly from natural suspicion, partly from consciousness of what passed in their own secret religious festivals, imagined all kinds of horrors in connection with our mysteries. From what transpired about the Lord's Supper, they believed that the Christians used to kill children and drink their blood and eat their flesh. Here, however, the context points to a different scandal. They are warned against the *fleshly lusts*, in order that the heathen may find that the Christians' great glory lies in the very point wherein they are slandered. "Evildoers," therefore, must mean chiefly offences on that score. It is historically certain that such charges against Christian purity were extremely common. Even as late as the persecution under Maximin II., in the year 312, it was reported that these meetings before light were a school for the vilest of arts.

By your good works which they shall behold.—More literally, *they may, in consequence of your beautiful works, being eye-witnesses*

thereof.—The "good works" are not what are commonly so called—i.e., acts of benevolence, &c. Rather, their "works" are contrasted with the current report, and mean scarcely more than the "conversation" mentioned already. The present passage is, no doubt, a reminiscence of Matt. v. 16, where the word has the same force.

Glorify God in the day of visitation.—This "glorification" of God will be like that of Achan in the book of Joshua (chap. vii. 19), an acknowledgment how far they had been from the glorious truth. Some commentators understand the day of visitation to mean the day when the heathen themselves come really to look into the matter. This is possible; and it came true when Pliny tortured the Christian deaconesses and acquitted the poor fanatics, as he thought them, of all immoral practices. But from the ordinary use of the words, it would more naturally mean the day when God visits. And this will not mean only the great last day, but on whatever occasion God brings matters to a crisis. The visitation is a visitation of the Christians and the heathen alike, and it brings both grace and vengeance, according as men choose to receive it. (See Luke xix. 44, and comp. Luke i. 78.)

⁽¹³⁾ **To every ordinance of man.**—Second prudential rule, subordination. Literally, *to every human creation, i.e., to every office or authority which men have established.* It is not only to ordinances of directly Divine institution that we are to submit. Mind that he does

as supreme; ⁽¹⁴⁾ or unto

Subjection to governors, as
authority. unto them

that are sent by him
for the punishment of
evildoers, and for the

not say we are to submit to every law that men may pass. This passage is most directly modelled on Rom. xiii. 1, *et seq.*, where the reason assigned for submission is the same as that in John xix. 11, viz., that ultimately the authority proceeds from God Himself. Here, however, the thought is quite different. They are to submit, but not because of the original source from which the authority flows, but because of the practical consequences of not submitting. It must be done "for the Lord's" (*i.e.*, Jesus Christ's) "sake," *i.e.*, in order not to bring discredit upon His teaching, and persecution upon His Church. This difference of treatment, in the midst of so much resemblance, shows that at the date of St. Peter's letter there was much more immediate cause for laying stress on political subordination. St. Paul, writing to the Roman Church, urges submission to Claudius, because the Roman Jews (among whom the Christians were reckoned) were often in trouble and expelled from the city of Rome (Acts xviii. 2). St. Peter, writing in all probability from the Roman Church, urges submission to Nero and the provincial governors because "ignorant and foolish men" were beginning to misrepresent the Christian Church as a kind of Internationalist or Socialist conspiracy.

The king, as supreme.—First division of second prudential rule: subordination political. Of course it means the emperor. The

name "king," though detested in Latin, was used without scruple by the provincial Greeks to express the sovereignty of the Cæsars. When he is described here as "supreme," it is not intended (as our English version would convey) to contrast his supreme power with the inferior power of the "governors;" the word is only the same which is rendered "higher" in Rom. xiii. 1. Huther rightly says, "The emperor was in the Roman Empire not merely the highest, but actually the only ruler; all other magistrates were but the instruments by which he exercised his sway." Of course all Asia Minor, to which St. Peter was writing, was in the Roman Empire; the language would have been different had the letter been addressed to, or perhaps had it even been written from, the geographical Babylon.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Governors, as unto them that are sent by him.**—This word will include *legati*, proconsuls, proprætors, procurators, all officers entrusted with the administration of provinces. Of course the person "by" whom they are here said to be (from time to time) "sent" is Cæsar, not "the Lord." The persons to whom the letter is addressed would have very little to do with Cæsar himself directly, their submission would be chiefly shown to the lieutenants. Yet how personal was the Imperial government, even in details, is shown in Pliny's letters; the very letter before that in which he asks how to deal with

praise of them that do
well. ⁽¹⁵⁾ For so is the will

of God, that with well
doing ye may put to silence

the Christians of Bithynia requests Trajan's leave to cover in an unhealthy beck in the town of Amastris.

For the punishment of evil-doers.—St. Peter credits Roman imperialism (rightly in the main) with having as its aim the promotion of moral behaviour among its subjects. The word for "punishment" is that which is translated "vengeance" in 2 Thess. i. 8, and implies forcing the malefactors to make satisfaction to those whom they had wronged, the "avenger" being, of course, quite disinterested. The "praise" which here, as in Rom. xiii. 3, is said to have been bestowed by the government on well-doers, must mean the solid praise of preferments, which is hardly so marked a feature of government as the foregoing. Be it observed that neither St. Peter nor St. Paul lay down any exceptions to the rule of complete obedience. They refuse to contemplate, at least to formulate, the occasions when disobedience may be necessary. Obedience is the first thing to learn, and when they have learnt it, they will know of themselves when to disobey. St. Peter himself stands to all time as the type of magnificent disobedience (Acts iv. 19).

⁽¹⁵⁾ **For so is the will of God.**—This refers to the command contained in the last two verses, which then is further explained by the clause which follows, "that with well-doing." See a very similar construction in 1 Thess. iv. 3. The "well-doing" of this and the last verse bears the most

general sense of good conduct, not the special sense noticed on the "fair works" and "fair life" of verse 12.

Put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.—A very contemptuous expression, the word for "put to silence" being the same as in 1 Cor. ix. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18, to "muzzle" or "gag," implying that there is something of the animal about these "foolish men." The same contempt appears in each word of the clause, even down to "men," which might be rendered "people" or "creatures." The word for "ignorance" implies a stolid and wilful ignorance, and is so used by heathen authors, as well as very markedly in the only other place in the New Testament, 1 Cor. xv. 34. "Foolish," too, contains moral reprobation, Luke xi. 40; xii. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 36, suggesting *thoughtlessness* rather than *senselessness*. The definite article is also used in the Greek (as in 2 Thess. iii. 2), and again seems to indicate that St. Peter had some particular enemies in view who had brought the charges. This accusation was evidently one of a *political* nature; and, indeed, history shows us that the hostility of the empire to the faith was entirely based on the corporate nature of the Christian religion. They would not have minded the *cultus*, but they could not tolerate the *Church*. Pliny distinctly says in his letter to Trajan, that it was in consequence of Trajan's issuing an order against *hetereæ* or societies, that he was led to contend with the Christians in Bithynia.

the ignorance of foolish men: ⁽¹⁶⁾ as free, and not using¹ *your* liberty for a

¹ Gr. *having*.
a Gal. 5.
13.
² Or, *Esteem*.

cloke of maliciousness,^a but as the servants of God. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Honour² all men. Love

⁽¹⁶⁾ **As free.**—This points at once to what was the gist of the accusation. The Christian took up a position of complete independence within, and professed himself in a certain sense to be above the laws, by virtue of being a member of Christ's kingdom. This position of independence the heathen state resented, and looked upon the Christian Church as a dangerous organisation. Here, therefore, St. Peter both insists upon, and defines that independent position. "This the Apostle adds," says Leighton, "lest any should so far mistake the nature of their Christian liberty as to dream of an exemption from obedience either to God or to man for His sake, and according to His appointment. Their freedom he grants, but would have them understand aright what it is."

And not using.—The word "as" in the Greek attaches better to the participle instead of to the word "cloke," so that the sentence will run, *As free* (i.e., as men who are really free), and not as using freedom for a curtain of vice. In this way the true and the false freedom are more forcibly contrasted.

For a cloke of maliciousness.—The uncommon word here used means any kind of covering, but not in the sense of a garment, so that we must not insist on the metaphor of the word "cloke." The same Greek word is used in Ex. xxvi. 14 to express the second covering of the tabernacle there

mentioned, i.e., the uppermost, outermost covering. Grimm quotes a fragment of the comic poet Menander, "Wealth is a covering of many a bad thing;" this helps us to see that what St. Peter means is not ordinary hypocrisy. The man does not profess to be better than he is, but loudly asserts that he is not a slave. Men admire such freedom of speech, and excuse his vices just because of their openness.

But as the servants of God.—Such freedom as has been mentioned is no freedom. It is moral slavery. The only true freedom lies in being "servants" (or rather *slaves*) "of God," whose will it is that you should be good subjects (verses 13 and 15). For a slightly different turn of thought, see Gal. v. 13.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Honour all men.**—"These words have very briefly, and yet not obscured by briefness, but withal very plainly, the sum of our duty towards God and men; to men, both in general, *honour all men*, and in special relations, in their Christian or religious relations, *love the brotherhood*; and in a chief civil relation, *honour the king*. And our whole duty to God, comprised under the name of His *fear*, is set in the middle betwixt these, as the common spring of all duty to men, and of all due observance of it, and the sovereign rule by which it is to be regulated" (Leighton). St. Paul had said that this honour was to be paid to those to whom it was due; St. Peter says

the brotherhood. Fear
God. Honour the king.
(18) Servants, be subject to

<sup>a Rom.
13. 7.</sup>

your masters with all
fear;^a not only to the good
and gentle, but also to the

that this includes all men; there is not one who can be entirely despised, not one who has quite lost the likeness of Christ; Jews are not at liberty to despise even the idolatrous Gentiles.

Love the brotherhood.—See chap. v. 9, and Note on chap. i. 22. The brotherhood means, of course, all Christian men, who (mystically even now that the Church is divided, but then actually) formed a single confraternity. "All men," Christian or heathen, are to be "honoured," but there is a special sense in which love is only possible between fellow-Christians. For the converse proposition, see Matt. v. 44.

Fear God.—This enforces reverence for every law and ordinance of God, and therefore serves fitly to introduce the next precept. Rebellion against Nero is rebellion against God (Rom. xiii. 2. Bengel compares Prov. xxiv. 21).

Honour the king.—This is the climax. Logically, the foregoing commands have only been inserted for the purpose of bringing out this last more clearly. This was the point on which the Christian religion was assailed, and the putting the readers through their catechism (as it were) of duties in other respects awakes their conscience to receive this precept. Verses 13—16 have insisted on the duty of political submission, and then the writer steps back, so to speak, for a final thrust: "so—as to all men you must pay reverence; as to the Christians, love; as to

God, fear—so to the emperor you must pay constant reverence." It is hardly right to say with Bengel that this paragraph is specially written because of the usual disaffection of Jews towards the Roman government; rather it is called for (like the warning of verses 11, 12), not by any special temptation within them, but by the particular circumstances of the time, *i.e.*, the calumnies that were afloat against Christians.

(18) **Servants.**—Second division of the second prudential rule: subordination social. This word is not the same as is used by St. Paul—*e.g.*, Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22—but is used only besides in Luke xvi. 13; Acts x. 7; Rom. xiv. 4. It brings forward the *family* or *household* relation of servant or slave to master, and not (as does the common word used in verse 16) the mere fact of *ownership*. We need not be surprised at directions for household servants, or slaves, in a letter addressed to *Jewish* Christians, for there were large numbers of Hebrews in this position both now and later; St. Clement, for example, was probably both.

Be subject.—Rather, *being subject*, or *submitting yourselves*. The participle joins this clause loosely to the "submit yourselves" of verse 13, where the word is the same. (Comp. chap. iii. 1.)

With all fear.—"All" implies everything which goes to make up true fear, every kind of fear; and the "fear" (as when we speak of the fear of God) is not

froward. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For this is
thankworthy, if a man for

conscience toward God en-
dure grief, suffering wrong-

intended to mean any unmanly cowardice, dread of punishment, or such terror as is involved in having secrets which one dreads to have divulged. One commentator well defines it as "the shrinking from transgressing the master's will, based on the consciousness of one's own inferiority."

Masters.—This is the word which properly corresponds to the word by which the "servants" are described, not merely "owners," as in Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22.

The froward.—Literally, *the crooked*. Its meaning is made clear by the contrasted adjectives, "good," i.e., kindly, considerate; and "gentle," or, rather, reasonable, not disposed to take too stern a view of matters. A "froward" master, then, is one with a warped nature, who is unreasonably exacting, capricious, and cross-grained; in fact, one who will deal with his servants in the manner spoken of in the following verses.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **For this is thankworthy.**— "This," viz., what goes before, which is further explained in what follows. Quite literally it is, *for this is grace*, or else (for, like *grâce* in French, the word has the double signification) *this is thanks*. The passage has some little importance in controversy, as some of the older Roman Catholic divines pressed it into the service of the supererogation theory. "This is grace," they said, means "this *deserves* grace as its reward." It is needless to point out how shallow a view of *duty* is implied in the thought that it was *more* than duty to be thus submissive.

Still taking the first translation others would interpret, "this is a mark of grace"—i.e., shows that you are Christians indeed; or, "this is a gift of grace"—i.e., a supernatural and heroic virtue, such as must have come from God, and not from you." These two interpretations make good sense in themselves, but they seem not to suit the context ("what *glory* is it") quite so well as our authorised rendering, and they ignore the sayings of our Lord, which must certainly have been in St. Peter's mind, recorded in Luke vi. 27—35, especially verses 32—34, and again in Luke xvii. 9. The thought is that where duty is both obvious and easy (as is the case with good masters), people do not lavish gratitude for the performance of it. The best of masters hardly feels grateful to the best of servants for *doing* his duty, though he will be grateful for the spirit and manner in which it is done. Here the "thanks" are put quite generally, as in the first passage in St. Luke: "this is a matter for thanks." It does not say as yet who is to pay the thanks, and we may naturally conclude that the master so served, and all who are cognisant of the service, are the persons meant.

For conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.—This does not mean "if a man is afflicted for his religion's sake." Rather, *the conscience towards God*, or, perhaps, rather, *consciousness of God*, is thrown in to guard against any false theory that patience *by itself* is a thankworthy thing. However

fully. ⁽²⁰⁾ For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall

take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it pa-

unjust the man's treatment may be, and however little he may resent it in act, it is not thankworthy unless his resignation be grounded on consciousness of God's presence. A resignation which comes from stolid want of feeling, or stoical fatalism, or from the sense that it is no good to seek redress—such resignation is sinfully defective. The two necessary qualifications, before patience can become in any sense meritorious, are (1) that the suffering should be *undeserved*, (2) that the man should recognise in it the hand of God.

⁽²⁰⁾ For what glory is it.—A poetical and pagan-sounding word, not elsewhere found in the New Testament; in the Old Testament it corresponds to the word "fame," in Job xxviii. 22. The sense may be said to be slightly humorous. "If you make a blunder" (such is the meaning of "fault" here—it might include such things as the breaking of dishes), "and receive a buffet for it" (or a box on the ear—a common punishment of slaves for trifling faults), "and bear it with fortitude" (the *meekness* of patience has no place in the word), "do you expect to be made the subject of an heroic or dithyrambic poem, to have your name resounded through the world, and immortalised among posterity?" The "for" at the beginning of the clause explains why the writer added "*suffering wrongfully*" at the end of the last.

for it.—It is a pity that the translators have limited St. Peter's meaning by the insertion of the last two words. It is unnecessary to understand the suffering to be directly *provoked* by the well-doing. It would have done just as well to say, "when ye do well, and yet are ill-treated." The "froward" master makes his servants suffer without thinking what he makes them suffer for.

This is acceptable with God.—Timidity about St. Peter's theology has caused a difference between the rendering of the same word in two consecutive verses. It should be translated "thankworthy" here as well as above, and must be taken in precisely the same sense. Observe that the Apostle does not continue, "this is glory," as we might have expected; a Christian is not supposed to care for such trash as fame. But a Christian may well care to win the *thanks of God*! And such endurance of griefs for God's sake is now distinctly said to be "thankworthy with God"—i.e., from God's point of view. See 2 Thess. i. 6, where, as here, it is assumed that the moral law is identical for God and for us, and that His principles and impulses of action are the same as those which He has implanted in us. "He will thank a man for it," says Archbishop Leighton, not a divine to favour the doctrine of human merit, but too honest a scholar to shrink from the meaning of words. Many things are strictly

When ye do well, and suffer

tiently, this *is* acceptable¹ with God. ⁽²¹⁾ For even hereunto were ye called:

¹ Or, *thank.*
² Some read, *for you.*

because Christ also suffered for us,² leaving us an example, that ye should

duty, and yet we do not expect to find them done, and are proportionably grateful when we see that they are done. And shall we, for the sake of a doctrinal thesis like that, "that man can deserve nothing at the hand of God," deny to God the possibility of enjoying one of the happiest exercises of love, the sense of gratitude?

⁽²¹⁾ **For even hereunto were ye called.**—Namely, to the combination of suffering and well-doing. To this they "were called" by the Gospel which St. Paul had preached to them; it ought not to be a surprise to them when it comes. (See chap. iv. 12.) It was a special point in St. Paul's preaching to forewarn fairly of the tribulations attending all who wished to enter the kingdom of God. Comp. 1 Thess. iii. 3, 4, and Acts xiv. 22, which latter passage refers to preaching in the very homes of some of the recipients of this Epistle.

Because.—This justifies the last assertion. It appeared on the very face of the gospel message that we should all (slave and free-man alike) have to do well, and at the same time suffer, because the gospel told us that it was so with Him, the subject of the gospel. Notice what a fine assumption lies in this "because"—viz., that Christ's experience must needs be that of every Christian.

Christ also suffered.—It is to be carefully observed again that he does not say "*Jesus* suffered;" the

whole point is that these Hebrew Christians have given in their adhesion to a *suffering Messiah*. (See Note on chap. i. 11.) And the true reading immediately after is "*for you*, leaving *you* an example that ye should follow His steps;" not, of course, that St. Peter exempts himself from the need of the atonement or the obligation of following Christ's steps, but because it is his accustomed style to give a charge (as it were) rather than to throw himself in with those whom he addresses. (See Note on chap. i. 12.) There is one important point to be observed. Christ is said to have suffered "*for you*," but this does not mean "*in your stead*," but "*on your behalf, for your good*." Christ's atonement for us is not represented in this passage as *vicarious*. He did not, according to St. Peter's teaching, die as a *substitute* for us, any more than He *rose again* as our substitute. So far as the words themselves go, the death of the Messiah "*for us*" might have been such a death as that of the hero who, in the battle of Murgarten, gathered the Austrian spears like a sheaf into his own bosom, "*for*" his fellow-patriots, clearing the way for them to follow. The addition "*for you*" conveys the thought that in gratitude we ought to suffer with, or even for, Him.

Leaving us (you) an example.—This clause seems added as a kind of explanation of the abrupt "*because*" just before. "*You were called to suffering, I*

follow his steps: ⁽²²⁾ who ^{b Isa. 53.} guile found in his mouth: ^b
 did no sin,^a neither was ^{a John 8. 46.} ⁽²³⁾ who, when he was re-

said, *because* Christ, too, suffered; for in so suffering He left ("as something to *survive* Him" is implied in the word) an example to you." (This last "you" stands very emphatically in the Greek.) The curious word for "example," nowhere else used in the New Testament, means primarily the "copy" given to a child to write from, or a "plan" suggested for carrying out in detail, a sketch to be filled in. It is used in this literal sense in 2 Macc. ii. 28, 29, and in the metaphorical sense it occurs repeatedly in the Epistle of St. Clement; in one passage (chap. xvi.) apparently with a reminiscence of this place, for the author has been quoting the passage of Isaiah to which we shall come presently, and then adds, "See then, beloved sirs, what is the copy which has been set us; for if the Lord was so lowly-minded, what shall we do who through Him have come under the yoke of His grace?" The leaving us of this copy was one of the benefits of His passion implied in "suffered for you."

Follow his steps.—In all probability St. Peter used the word rendered "example" without any sense of its containing a metaphor, or else it would accord badly with the metaphor here. The word for "follow" is a strengthened form, and in 1 Tim. v. 10 is rendered "diligently follow;" in verse 24 of the same chapter it is "follow after"—*i.e.*, "dog;" the only other place being Mark xvi. 20. It means (as in 1 Tim. v. 24) rather "to follow up," made still more vivid by the addition of "His steps"

(Rom. iv. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 18). St. Peter could remember the day when he was called to follow, and he did so literally (Matt. iv. 19; John xxi. 19); but the Pontine Christians, who had believed without having seen (chap. i. 8), could only "follow Him up" by the footprints which He had left.

⁽²²⁾ **Who did no sin.**—This verse is not to be taken by itself, but in the closest conjunction with the following. It is not the sinlessness of Christ by itself that is here set as an example before the servants, but His sinlessness in combination with His ill-treatment, or rather His meekness under the combination. St. Peter again adapts the words of Isaiah (chap. liii. 9) to his purpose. The word there was one of violent transgression; St. Peter substitutes the simple word which he had used in verse 20, "fault"—"who never made a fault"—such as household servants were often committing—"neither was guile found in his mouth"—again referring to what was common with servants—petty acts of dishonesty, and petty deceits to screen themselves from punishment. One thing which lends special point to the allusion to Isaiah's prophecy is that Israel is in that passage spoken of under the title of God's "servant," a thought familiar to St. Peter long ago in connection with Christ. (See Note on Acts iii. 13.)

⁽²³⁾ **Who, when he was re-**
viled.—This "who" might be rendered by *and yet He*. Conscious though He was of being blameless (John viii. 46), it did not make

viled, ^c reviled not again; ^d when he suffered, he	^c ch. 3. 9. ^d Isa. 53. ^e 7. ^f Or, com- mitted his cause.	threatened not; but com- mitted <i>himself</i> ¹ to him
---	---	---

Him retaliate upon His accusers by counter-accusations, true though these might have been. The word here translated "revile" is the same which reappears in chap. iii. 9 as "railing," and a sample of what it means is given in John ix. 28. The servants would be particularly liable to be thus abused, and instances are not wanting in the comic poets where they lose their self-control under it, and openly rate their owners in return. The "suffering," on the other hand, implies actual bodily maltreatment, "buffeting" (verse 20) and the like, to which the slaves could not answer directly by striking in return, but would sometimes take their revenge by "threats" of what they would do—run away, or burn the house, or poison the food, or do little acts of spite. Instances of our Lord's silence or meekness under "reviling" may be seen in John vii. 20; viii. 40; Matt. xii. 24, as well as in the accounts of the Passion. There are no recorded instances, until the last day of His life, of His "suffering" in the sense here intended; but the tense of the verbs "reviled," "threatened," "committed," shows that the writer was not thinking exclusively of any one occasion, but of our Lord's constant habit, though naturally there would be uppermost in St. Peter's mind the hours while he stood warming himself at Caiaphas' fire, with the denial on his lips, and saw the Messiah blindfold and buffeted. He is also thinking of Isa. liii. 7.

But committed himself.—

This was His only form of revenge. As the Greek does not express the grammatical object of the verb, it is better not to supply one so definite as "Himself" or "His cause," rather, "but would leave it to Him that judgeth righteously." M. Renan (*Antéchrist*, p. 117) says that this passage "requires it to be understood that the incident of Jesus praying for His murderers was not known by Peter;" and other critics have held the same view. But (1) St. Peter, as we have said, is speaking of what was the *constant habit* of Jesus, not of what He did on the day of His crucifixion only. (2) The word does not necessarily imply any act or word of direct appeal to God to judge between His murderers and Him; on the contrary, the leading thought is that of "passing the matter over" to God (comp. Rom. xii. 19), by simply refusing to take any action in self-defence. (3) It would have been unlike the usual method of the Epistles to make direct reference to any of the minor details of our Lord's history. (4) Such a reference here would be beyond the point, for St. Peter said nothing in verse 19 about *praying* for the bad masters, and here he is only justifying by Christ's example the position he had laid down there.

To him that judgeth righteously.—God is described in the aspect which is most reassuring to men who are suffering unjustly (2 Thess. i. 5). This looks back to that "consciousness of God" spoken of in verse 19. There is a curious various reading which is

that judgeth righteously : ^{a Isa. 53. 11, 12; Heb. 9. 28.} ^{1 Or, to.} our sins^a in his own body
 (24) who his own self bare on¹ the tree, that we, being

adopted by the Vulgate, though without any solid authority, and evidently a mere blunder, the interpretation of which we may leave to those who are committed to it: "He gave Himself over to him (or, to one) who judgeth unrighteously." St. Cyprian seems to have understood it of our Lord's voluntary self-surrender to Pilate.

(24) **Who his own self.**—This verse, like the "for you" in verse 21, is intended to make the readers feel the claims of gratitude, not to set before them another point in which Christ was to be imitated. But at the same time it serves to enforce still more strongly the two points already mentioned—*i.e.*, sinlessness and suffering. So far was Christ from "doing sins," that He actually His own self bore ours, and in so doing endured the extremity of anguish "in His own body," so that He could sympathise with the corporal chastisements of these poor servants; and "on the tree," too, the wicked slave's death.

Bare our sins . . . on the tree.—This brings us face to face with a great mystery; and to add to the difficulty of the interpretation, almost each word is capable of being taken in several different ways. Most modern scholars are agreed to reject "*on the tree*," in favour of the marginal "*to*," the proper meaning of the Greek preposition when connected (as here) with the accusative, being what is expressed in colloquial English by the useful compound "*on-to the tree*." It is, however, not obligatory to see motion consciously intended in this preposition and accu-

sative everywhere. It is used, for instance, Mark iv. 38, of sleeping *on the pillow*; in 2 Cor. iii. 15, of the veil resting *upon* their hearts; in Rev. iv. 4, of the elders sitting *upon* their thrones. This word, then, will give us but little help to discover the meaning of the word translated "*bare*." (1) That verb means literally "to carry or take up," and is used thus in Matt. xvii. 1, Mark ix. 2, of taking the disciples up the Mount of Transfiguration; and in Luke xxiv. 51, of Jesus being carried up into heaven: therefore Hammond, Grimm, and others would here understand it to be, "He carried our sins up with Him *on-to the tree*," there to expiate them by His death. (2) A much commoner meaning of the word is that which it bears in verse 5, "*to offer up*" (so also in Heb. vii. 27; xiii. 15; Jas. ii. 21). The substantive formed from it (*Anaphora*) is still the liturgical term for the sacrificial section of the Eucharistic service. This interpretation is somewhat tempting, because the very preposition here used, with the very same case, appears in Jas. ii. 21, and frequently in the Old Testament, together with our present verb, for "*to offer up upon the altar*." In this way it would be, "He offered up our sins in His own body *on the altar of the cross*." So Luther and others take it. This would be perfect were it not for the strangeness of regarding the sins themselves as a sacrifice to be offered on the altar. The only way to make sense of it in that case would be to join very closely "our sins in His own body"—*i.e.*,

dead to sins, should live ^{a Col. 1.} _{22.} | unto righteousness :^a by

as contained and gathered up in His own sinless body, which might come to nearly the same thing as saying that He "offered up His own body laden with our sins" upon that altar. (3) Both these renderings, however, pass over the fact that St. Peter is referring to Isa. liii. In the English version of that chapter, "hath borne," "shall bear," "bare," appears in verses 4, 11, and 12, indifferently; but the Hebrew is not the same in each case, for in verse 11 the word for "shall bear" is identical with that rightly rendered "carry" in verse 4, and has not the same signification as that which appears as "to bear" in verses 4 and 12. The difference between these two Hebrew roots seems to be that the verb *sabal* in verse 11 means "to carry," as a porter carries a load, or as our Lord carried His cross; while the verb *nasa'*, used in verses 4 and 12, means rather "to lift or raise," which might, of course, be the action preparatory to that other of "carrying." Now, the Greek word which we have here undoubtedly better represents *nasa'* than *sabal*, but the question is complicated by the fact that the LXX. uses it to express both alike in verses 11 and 12, observing at the same time the distinction between "iniquities" and "sin," while in verse 4 (where again it reads "our sins" instead of "our griefs") it adopts a simpler verb; and St. Peter's language here seems to be affected by all three passages. The expression "our sins" (which comes in so strangely with the use of "you" all round) seems a reminiscence of verse 4 (LXX.).

The order in which the words occur is precisely the order of verse 11, and the tense points to verse 12, as well as the parallel use in Heb. ix. 28, where the presence of the words "of many" proves that the writer was thinking of verse 12. We cannot say for certain, then, whether St. Peter meant to represent *nasa'* or *sabal*. We have some clue, however, to the way in which the Greek word was used, by finding it in Num. xiv. 33, where the "whoredoms" of the fathers are said to be "borne" by their children (the Hebrew there being *nasa'*). Many instances in classical Greek lead to the conclusion that in such cases it implies something being *laid* or *inflicted* from without upon the person who "bears." Thus, in Num. xiv. 33, it will be, "your children will *have to bear* your whoredoms," or, "will have laid upon them your whoredoms." In Heb. ix. 28 it will be, "Christ was once for all presented (at the altar), to have the sins of many laid upon Him." Here it will be, "Who His own self had our sins laid upon His body on the tree." Then comes a further question. The persons who hold the substitute theory of the Atonement assert that "our sins" here stands for "the *punishment* of our sins." This is, however, to use violence with words; we might with as good reason translate verse 22, "Who did, or performed, no punishment for sin." St. Peter asserts that Christ, in His boundless sympathy with fallen man, in His union with all mankind through the Incarnation whereby He became the second Adam, actually

whose stripes ye were | ^{a Isa. 53.}_{5.} | healed.^{a (25)} For ye were as

took, as His own, our sins, as well as everything else belonging to us. He was so identified with us, that in the great Psalm of the Messianic sacrifice, He calls them "My sins" (Ps. xl. 12), sinless as He was. (See St. Matthew's interpretation of the same thought, chap. viii. 17.)

That we being dead.—Just as the former part of this verse is an expansion of "Christ suffered for us," so the latter part is an expansion of "that ye should follow His steps." The "we," however, is too emphatically placed in the English. To St. Peter, the thought of our union with Christ is so natural, that he slips easily over it, and passes on to the particular point of union which he has in view. "He bore our sins on the tree, in order that, having thus become 'lost' to those sins, we might live to righteousness." The words present, perhaps, a closer parallel to Col. i. 22 than to any other passage; but comp. also Rom. vi. 2, 8, 11, and 2 Cor. v. 14, and Notes. St. Peter's word for "dying" in this place is not elsewhere found in the New Testament, and is originally an euphemism for death; literally, *to be missing*—i.e., when sin comes to seek its old servants it finds them gone.

With whose stripes ye were healed.—Observe how soon St. Peter reverts to the second person, even though he has to change the text he is quoting. Another mark of his style may well be noticed here, viz., his fondness for a number of co-ordinate relative sentences. (See chap. i. 8, 12; 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3; and his

speeches, Acts iii. 13, 15; iv. 10; x. 38, 39.) He is especially fond of finishing off a long sentence with a short relative clause, as here. Comp., for instance, verse 8, 2 Pet. ii. 17, also Acts iv. 12, where it would be more correct to translate, "Neither is the salvation in any other, for, indeed, there is no second name under heaven which is *the appointed* name among men; *in whom we must be saved*"—i.e., if we are saved at all. The purpose of the little clause seems to be once more to make the good and ill-used servants feel, when the weals were smarting on their backs, that the Righteous Servant of Jehovah had borne the same, and that it had served a beneficial purpose, as they knew to their everlasting gratitude. Of course the "stripes" (in the original singular number, and literally *weal*) do not refer *merely* to the scourging. The words form a paradox.

⁽²⁵⁾ **For ye were as sheep going astray.**—The right reading does not attach "going astray" to "sheep," but as predicate of the sentence, "ye were going astray like sheep." The "for" introduces an explanation of how they came to be in need of "healing." "I may well say that ye were healed; for Israelites though you are, your consciences and memories tell you that you were as far gone in wilful error as any Gentiles, and needed as complete a conversion." (Comp. verse 10.) Jew and Gentile take different ways, but both alike fulfil the prophecy, "every man to his own way." The two metaphors, of healing and going astray, do not match very well, but the fact that

sheep going astray;^a but are now returned unto the <sup>a Isa. 53. 6
b ch. 5. 4;
Heb.
13. 20.</sup> Shepherd^b and Bishop of your souls.

both are quotations from Isa. liii. makes their disagreement less harsh. We must notice how deeply that prophecy (the interpretation of which was probably learned from the Baptist) had sunk into St. Peter's mind. (See chap. i. 19.)

But are now returned.—The tense of the original verb points to the actual historical time at which it took place, rather than the position now occupied, "but now ye returned." The word "now" is used in the same way in verse 10, where literally it is, "but now *did* obtain mercy." "Returned" does not in the Greek imply that they had at first been under the Shepherd's care and had left Him. The word is that which is often rendered "were converted," and only indicates that they turned round and moved in a contrary direction.

The shepherd and bishop of your souls.—Undoubtedly this means Christ. The first of the two titles is of course suggested by the simile of the sheep. The image is so natural and so frequent, that we cannot say for certain that it proves St. Peter's acquaintance with the parable of the Good Shepherd in John x. More probably, perhaps, he is thinking of Ps. xxiii. 3, "He converted *my soul*" (LXX.), where "the Lord," as usual, may be taken to mean the Son of God rather than the Father; or else of Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 16, where the words rendered "seek them out" in our version is represented in the LXX. by that from which the name of a

"bishop" is derived. (Comp. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; also Isa. xl. 11, which last citation comes from a passage which has been in St. Peter's mind just before, chap. i. 24.) It is hardly necessary to add that to the Hebrew mind the thought of superintendence and ruling, not that of giving food, was uppermost when they spoke of shepherds, and that the pastors spoken of in the Old Testament are not the priests or givers of spiritual nutriment, but the kings and princes. Thus it will here be nearly synonymous with the second title of bishop. This name suggests in the first instance not so much overseeing as *visiting*—i.e., going carefully into the different cases brought under the officer's notice. (Comp. chap. v. 2, 4, and Acts xx. 28.) Both words were already familiar as ecclesiastical words already, and as such were especially appropriate to Christ, the Head of the Church; but as they had not yet become stereotyped in that sense, the writer adds, "of your souls," to show that it was not an outward sovereignty and protectorate which the Messiah had assumed over them. "Soul" is a word of which St. Peter is fond (chaps. i. 9, 22; ii. 11; iv. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 8), but which is, perhaps, never used by St. Paul in this sense. It is to be remarked how St. Peter works almost every section of the Epistle round, so as to end with some encouragement to the readers to cling to Jesus as the Messiah, and to their Christian state, from which they were in danger of receding into Judaism. He makes

CHAPTER III. —

Chap. iii. 1—6.
Subjection of
wives to hus-
bands.

(¹) Likewise,
ye wives, be
in subjection

A.D.
cir. 60.
a Eph. 5.
22; Col.
3. 18;
Tit. 2. 5.

to your own husbands; ^athat, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won

even the special exhortations lead up to that which is the main exhortation of the Letter.

III.

(¹) Likewise ye wives . . .

—Third division of second prudential rule: subordination conjugal. Here, again, the form in the original is participial, joining this injunction on to chap. ii. 13, 18, where the word is the same in Greek, “wives, in the same way submitting yourselves.” Whether this imposes for all time upon Christian wives as complete a submission towards their husbands as is here enjoined might perhaps be questioned, because the special reason for the command in this place was to allay suspicions engendered by the boldness with which Christianity proclaimed the freedom of the individual. St. Peter has just been giving injunctions for absolute submission, even to injustice, on the part of slaves; and the progress of Christianity has abolished slavery altogether. The measure of the Christian wife’s submission may safely be left to her own enlightened conscience, guided by other passages of the New Testament not written, like this, for a special emergency.

Your own husbands.—This does not order submission to the husband in contrast to submission to other directors, but rather gives a *reason* for obedience. “The Christian wife that hath love to

God,” says Leighton, “though her husband be not so comely, or so wise, or any way so amiable, as many others, yet because he is her *own husband*, and because of the Lord’s command in the general, and His providence in the particular disposal of His own, therefore she loves and obeys.”

That if any obey not the word.—Rather, *in order that even supposing some (at present) disobey the word.* “The word” is, of course, the Gospel, the declaration of the fulfilment of the prophecies in Jesus. And those who “disobey the word” are, according to constant usage, the Jews. The present verb is used of the Jews in Acts xiv. 2; xvii. 5; xix. 9; Rom. x. 21; xi. 31; xv. 31, besides St. Peter’s own use in chap. ii. 8; iv. 17. The only places where it is distinctly used of others are Rom. ii. 8 (of Jew and Gentile together), Rom. xi. 30 (where the Gentiles are compared with the Jews), Heb. iii. 18 (of the Israelites in the wilderness), Heb. xi. 31 (of the men of Jericho), 1 Pet. iii. 20 (of the refractory antediluvians). In any case it must mean a wilful refusal to submit to the Word, in spite of being intellectually convinced. (See especially chap. ii. 8.) For every reason, therefore, it is more probable that the case here supposed is that of Hebrew (Christian) women, married to men of their own race who reject the gospel.

They also may. . . —The order here is not so neat as in the original,

by the conversation of the wives; ⁽²⁾ while they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.

⁽³⁾ Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of

and it spoils the point to insert the definite article before "word." It should run, *In order that . . . through their wives' conversation, without a word, they may (literally shall) be gained.* There is something almost playful in the substitution of "their wives" instead of "you," and in the "without a word" contrasted with "the word" before. St. Peter seems to enjoy laying the little innocent plot. He was himself, as the Prayer Book reminds us, a married man. And what he means here, is not that those who have resisted the public preaching in the synagogues, should even without that public preaching be won; rather, that though the gospel as uttered verbally only provokes them to opposition, the gospel as submissively *acted* by their wives, without a word said on the matter, ought to convert them. "This model of submission and humility," says M. Renan, meaning the Lamb of God, "is made by Peter the law for all classes of Christian society. The wife above all, without setting up for a preacher (*sans faire la prêchuse*), ought by the discreet charm of her piety, to be the great missionary of the faith." The word rendered "won" keeps up the playfulness of that which goes before; it means "to turn a profit," and there is just enough of *ruse* in it to make the enforcement of submission to a husband of opposed religious views seem an enticing little speculation. The tense of the

original verb indicates that the scheme is certain to succeed. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20.) Archbishop Leighton points out that in Hebrew the name of the book of "Ecclesiastes; or, the Preacher," is a feminine, and the same is the case in Ps. lxxviii. 11, and elsewhere.

⁽²⁾ **While they behold . . .**—The same curious word as in chap. ii. 12, and the tense, which is ill-represented by "while they behold," sets us at the moment of the triumph of the wife's conduct, literally, *having kept*, or *when they have kept an eye on your chaste conversation*. The husband is jealously on the watch to see what his wife does who has embraced these foolish notions; at last he breaks down. Jesus must be the Messiah, or his wife could not have been so chaste! The adjective "chaste" is here to be taken in a large sense; it is the same which enters into the verb translated "purify" in chap. i. 22, and it is implied that the "fear" (*i.e.*, of the husband; comp. Note on chap. ii. 18) has been an incentive to this sweet virtue; "your life so immaculate in fear," or even almost "so timidly pure." Leighton says, "It is a delicate, timorous grace, afraid of the least air, or shadow of anything that hath but a resemblance of wronging it, in carriage or speech, or apparel, as follows in the third and fourth verses."

⁽³⁾ **Whose adorning let it not be . . .**—The passage shows

gold, or of putting on of apparel; ^a ⁽⁴⁾ but let it be the hidden man of the	^a ¹ Tim. ^{2.} ^{9.}	heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet
--	---	--

that the Asiatic Christians were not all of the poorer classes. Many of the wealthy Jewesses had joined them. The wealth of the Ephesian Christians about this time may be gathered from 1 Tim. ii. 9, and of the Laodiceans from Rev. iii. 17. Two things are to be noted about the advice here given. (1) It is not intended directly as a corrective of vanity. St. Peter is not bidding them beware of love of dress, although (as Bengel points out) the three words of "plaiting," "wearing" (literally, *putting round oneself*), and "putting on," are intended to convey the notion of elaborate processes in which time is wasted. But the main thought is, How are the husbands to be attracted? Not, says St. Peter, by any external prettiness of adornment, but by inward graces. (2) The Apostle is not *forbidding* the use of gold, &c. Leighton (himself something of a precisian) says, "All regard of comeliness and ornament in apparel is not unlawful, nor doth the Apostle's expression here, rightly considered, fasten that upon the adorning he here speaks of. He doth no more universally condemn the use of gold for ornament than he doth any other comely raiment, which here he means by that general word of *putting on of apparel*, for his 'not' is comparative; *not this adorning, but the ornament of a meek spirit*, that rather, and as much more comely and precious; as that known expression (Hos. vi. 6), '*I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*'" At the same time

he is, of course, speaking of these things with studied contempt: and we may be sure he would have spoken with abhorrence of any adorning which partook of the nature of lying. Even in one of Xenophon's works there is a charming passage where an Athenian gentleman expostulates with his wife on the folly of hoping to attract him by wearing high-heeled shoes and painting her face with rouge and white.

(4) But let it be . . .—The connection of the clauses is somewhat difficult, but is made more so by our translation of verse 3. Literally it would run, *of whom let it not be, or to whom let there not belong the outward adorning, but the hidden man of the heart*. If we adopt the translation in the Authorised Version, it makes "the hidden man" an ornament to be worn in preference to the gold and braided hair, which would be both illogical and dishonouring to "the hidden man." What St. Peter says is, "Do not rely, for winning your husbands upon ornamentation (which is but external), but upon character."

The hidden man of the heart.—Not equivalent to St. Paul's expression, "the *new man*" (Eph. iv. 24), but simply *the inner self, the true self*—i.e., the genuine moral character. It is more like St. Paul's phrase, "the inward man," and may, perhaps, have been adapted from it. (Comp. Rom. vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Eph. iii. 16.) According to his custom, St. Peter

spirit, which is in the sight | of God of great price.

explains by adding the genitive, "of the heart." (Comp. chap. i. 13.) At the same time, the choice of that particular word, rather than "soul" or "mind," gives warmth and affection to what might otherwise seem a bare moral or metaphysical conception.

In that which is not corruptible.—The sense is somewhat obscured by our insertion of "even the ornament." Had it been "even in the ornament," it would have been clearer, though not right even then. It is literally, *in the imperishableness of the meek and quiet spirit*, contrasting the abiding beauty of character with the "perishable" or "contemptible" nature of the ornaments just spoken of. So in chap. i. 18, he spoke of "silver and gold" as "perishable." The same kind of phrase is used by St. Paul in 1 Tim. vi. 17, "trust in the uncertainty of riches"—i.e., in riches which are but uncertain things. So here, "in the imperishableness of the meek spirit" means *in the meek spirit, which is not (like gold) a perishable thing*. Yet the preposition "in" must not be taken as equivalent to "dressed in," "adorned with;" the "meek and quiet spirit" is not a mere *decoration* of the "hidden man." Neither, on the other hand, is it quite "consisting in," as though "hidden man" and "meek spirit" were identical; for "the hidden man of the heart" would be bad in bad men, and good in good: see, for instance, our Lord displaying the hidden man of the Pharisee's heart (Matt. xxiii. 28). It is rather the particular *mode* in which St. Peter wishes the inward character to ex-

hibit itself. We might paraphrase the whole thus:—"Let it not be with you a matter of external ornamentation—elaborate processes, and costly, but perishable, decorations—but let it be a matter of the heart, the character, the true self, manifesting itself in a constant tone of unassuming and imperturbable sweetness—an imperishable attraction." The word "spirit" here is used, not in its strict metaphysical sense, but in the sense of a mood or general tenour and complexion of life; as, for instance, in Luke ix. 55 (perhaps), 1 Cor. iv. 21, Gal. vi. 1, and elsewhere. St. Peter assures us in this passage that those moral characteristics which we may gain in this life will also remain our characteristics in the next.

Which is in the sight of God of great price.—The antecedent to "which" has been variously taken. Is it "the meek and quiet spirit?" Is it "the imperishableness of the meek and quiet spirit?" Or is it "the hidden man of the heart exhibiting itself in such a spirit?" Each has something to be said for it, but the last seems nearest to the truth. The thing which is valuable in the eyes of God is the *having* such an inward character. Thus we might put a stronger stop at the word "spirit;" and this relative clause will be another instance of the favourite mode of speech adopted by St. Peter, as noticed on chap. ii. 24. Such a possession will be not only attractive to the husband for the time, but has likewise a permanent value as being esteemed by God.

(5) For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned them-

selves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: ⁽⁶⁾ even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him

(5) **For after this manner.**—Here we have not only the ground of the foregoing precepts, but also of the assurance that God sets a value on such embellishments. It had been accepted by Him in the holy women of old who hoped in Him, and would be accepted again. "The Apostle enforces his doctrine by example," says Leighton: "the most compendious way of teaching." By "holy women" he means, not only holy in character, but "sainted"—consecrated by their memories being recorded for our reverence in Holy Writ.

Who trusted in God.—It is a great pity that "trusted" should have been substituted for the original "hoped." The position of Sara and the holy women of the Old Testament was one of *expectancy*, of looking forward to the fulfilment of a promise; and the description of them as such is intended to make the readers of the Letter feel the difference of *their* position. To *them* the promise to Sara was accomplished. The expression contains a reference to the mention of God in the last verse.

Adorned themselves, being in subjection.—The imperfect tense of the verb means "*used* to adorn themselves." They took daily pains thus to adorn themselves, and spent, perhaps, as long in the process as the other ladies over their toilette. The participle which is added explains more fully the "after this manner."

Their subjection was their ornament.

(6) **Even as Sara.**—A definite example of the general fact just alleged. St. Peter seems rather to have argued from what every one would feel *must* have been the case than from explicit records. Sara's usual subjection is clearly seen in the one instance to which St. Peter refers (Gen. xviii. 12), where Sara, though not addressing Abraham, but speaking to herself, calls him "my lord." People show their usual habits of mind more freely in speaking to themselves.

Whose daughters ye are.—A very misleading version, following the Vulgate. What St. Peter says is, *whose children ye became, or were made*. There was a definite period in their past lives at which they came to be—what they were not before—children of Sara. Have we not here, therefore, a distinct proof that these readers of the Epistle were Gentiles and not Jewesses? Not so. The phrase, "which hoped in God," pointing as it does to the coming of the Messiah, prepares us to understand how these Hebrew women *became* Sara's children. It was only by entering into her hope and attaching themselves to Jesus Christ, for whose coming she had looked. St. Peter has already been insisting on the nothingness of the fleshly descent, the "corruptible seed." As has been pointed out on chap. i. 24, this doctrine was not first taught by St. Paul, for St. Peter had

lord : ^a whose daughters¹ ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid^b with

^a Gen. 18. 12. 1 Gr. chil- dren. ^b Prov. 3. 25.	any amazement. ⁽⁷⁾ Likewise, ye husbands, dwell
--	--

Chap. iii. 7. Corresponding duty of husbands.

heard it from the Baptist (Matt. iii. 9) and from our Lord Himself (John viii. 39). Whether persons were naturally Jews or Gentiles, they could not be children of Abraham without voluntarily becoming so by embracing his principles—i.e., by becoming Christians. The participial clauses which follow will need no change of translation, for they express not the act or process by which these ladies *became* children of Sara, but the condition on which they would *remain* her children. A very similar passage occurs in Heb. iii. 14 : “We have become partakers of the Christ, if (for the future) we hold,” &c. (Comp. also 1 Thess. iii. 8; Heb. iii. 6).

Do well.—See chap. ii. 12, 15, 20. The word means, of course, general good behaviour, especially in all wifely duties. As this is a condition of remaining Sara’s children, it is implied that it was a characteristic of Sara. Some critics would even put in a parenthesis all the words from “even as” to “ye are,” and attach these principles (as they are in the Greek) to the last clause in verse 5, thus : “adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands (as Sara, for instance . . . whose daughters ye were made), doing well, and not being afraid,” &c. This is, however, somewhat cumbersome, and leaves the clause “whose daughters ye became” a little too bald.

Are not afraid with any amazement.—Though this translation is grammatically possible, it

does not make such good sense as to translate, *are not afraid of any alarm*. It is, in fact, a quotation from or allusion to Prov. iii. 25, as Bengel points out, where “Be not afraid of sudden fear” is rendered in the LXX. by these same peculiar words. The “Wisdom” in that passage, which brings the calmness with it, is Christ, and it is Christ who must be understood in verse 26 : “the Lord shall be thy confidence.” To be afraid of sudden alarms and panics argues a lack of trust in God’s providence and power, and would, therefore, be unbecoming the daughters of Sara, who “hoped in God.” The “alarms” which they naturally might fear are, of course, quite general, but especially here, we may suppose, dread of what their unbelieving husbands might do to them. (Comp. verse 13 *et seq.*)

(7) Likewise, ye husbands.—The subjection is not to be all one-sided, though the husband’s subjection to the wife will be of a different kind from the wife’s to him. We are hardly to take this as a separate paragraph from the foregoing, but rather as a corollary added to it, to correct a false impression that might otherwise have been conveyed.

Dwell.—Rather, *dwelling*. The participle is attached to the previous sentences, just as in chaps. ii. 16, 18, iii. 1; but St. Peter does not like to say to the husbands “submitting yourselves” (though it is implied in the “likewise”), and conveys the deference which the

with *them*^a according to knowledge, giving honour^b unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and

^a 1 Cor. 7.
12.
^b 1 Thess.
4. 4.

husbands are to pay under other terms: such as "according to knowledge," "giving honour."

With them.—The whole order of the sentences needs re-arrangement as follows: *Ye husbands, likewise, dwelling according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, with what is female, apportioning honour as to joint heirs also of a grace of life.* In order to understand this very hard passage, we must remember what is St. Peter's object all throughout these instructions, viz., to commend Christianity to jealous watchers without. Here, therefore, we may well suppose that he is thinking chiefly of the case of believing husbands (Jewish) married to unbelieving wives (Jewish also), thus presenting the counter-picture to that of verse 1. And the first thing is that they are to "dwell with" these wives, not to divorce them, nor to cease from conjugal cohabitation with them; such harshness would lend very little attractiveness to the Christian religion among the Jewish homes to which the divorced wife would turn. (See 1 Cor. vii. 12 *et seq.*—a passage which must almost have been in St. Peter's mind.)

According to knowledge.—This phrase, which is like an adverb, such as "scientifically, intelligently," means that the husband is to study to enter into the whole bearings of the case, to take everything into account. Husband and wife will not get on together smoothly at haphazard, without pains taken to *understand* the situation. (See 1 Thess. iv. 4; "you should *know*.")

Unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel.—Or rather, as we now take it, *as with a weaker vessel, with what is female.* This explains the saying "according to knowledge." The thing which the husband is specially to understand and take into account is that he is dealing with a thing less strong than himself. The whole of chivalry is in these words, and St. Peter (next after Christ) may be considered the founder of it. Weakness itself, by being weakness, has a claim upon the strong man's deference and self-submission. The weakness here ascribed to the female sex is primarily that of the body, as we shall see when we consider the word "vessel," though it may, perhaps, indicate frailty in other respects as well. If the word "vessel" is to be here a description of a "wife," as some contend on 1 Thess. iv. 4, in a sense in which it does not equally describe a husband, it is difficult to see with what the vessel is compared and pronounced weaker. "Dwell with the female as with a more delicate vessel or instrument" than what? If we answer "than yourselves," it becomes clear that the husbands are, by implication, *less* delicate vessels. And this is the case. In the Note on 1 Thess. iv. 4, it has been shown that the word "vessel" (whether as receptacle or as instrument) is a description of the *body*, or rather of the *self* as manifested in the body. The word in itself may be used to describe anything made to be serviceable—machinery, tackle and gear, pots and pans, and, in fact, any kind of apparatus or

as being heirs together
of the grace of life;

that your prayers be not
hindered.

implement—and here it might be very fairly rendered, “as with a weaker thing or object.” That which is translated “the wife” is really a neuter adjective, and it is a question whether we are to supply with it the noun “vessel”—“with the female [vessel] as with a vessel which is weaker”—or whether it is to stand absolutely, “the female,” as we say “the good,” “the evil”—*i.e.*, “that which is female.” The latter seems, on the whole, simpler and more forcible, as calling closer attention to the fact of weakness being inherent in the sex.

Giving honour.—The word for “giving” implies rendering a portion which is *due*. And what is here called “honour” is not to be understood only of the wife’s maintenance (as some say), though such is probably the interpretation of the word in 1 Tim. v. 17, and comp. Ex. xxi. 10; nor is the wife only to be honoured by being consulted in affairs of moment and put in charge of the household. The “honour” to be accorded to wives “as to joint heirs of a grace of life” is the same kind of “honour” as St. Paul in 1 Thess. iv. 4, says must be accorded to oneself. Indeed, from the juxtaposition of three significant words there, we can hardly escape the conclusion that St. Peter was remembering that passage of St. Paul, “that every one of you should *know* how to obtain possession of the *vessel* of himself in sanctification and *honour*.” It is that chaste respect for the wife which is meant in the Prayer Book by the phrase, “With my body I thee worship.” It means that the

husband must not dare to take any *liberties* with his wife. Would the Christian husband be likely to approve his religion to the unbelieving wife if she found that he took a coarse view of the conjugal tie?

And as being heirs together of the grace of life.—There is here a very intricate question of readings, on which it depends whether the “heirs” are to be nominative or dative, the husbands or the wives. The present annotator prefers, on the whole, to follow Tischendorf, and read the dative, “paying respect as to persons who are also joint heirs (*i.e.*, with you) of a grace of life.” Happily, it comes to much the same thing, the only difference being that in the one case deference is paid to the wife on the ground of her possessing a joint dignity with the husband, and in the other case on the ground that the husband does not possess his dignity except conjointly with the wife. That dignity which they conjointly “inherit”—*i.e.*, possess as a gift from God—is called “the grace (or perhaps, a grace) of life.” This is generally interpreted to mean, “the gracious gift of everlasting life.” Undoubtedly, “life” is often used absolutely in the New Testament to mean eternal life—*e.g.*, Matt. xviii. 8; and it gives a very intelligible sense that the husband should reverence the wife as being equally with himself an everlasting soul. But this neither gives sufficient force to the *conjoint* nature of the possession, nor does it take into account the possibility of such a case, as, in fact, we suppose to be here intended,

Chap. iii. 8—12.
Mutual duties of
all.

(8) Finally,
be ye all of
one mind,

¹ Or, lov-
ing to
the bre-
thren.

having compassion one of
another, love¹ as brethren,
be pitiful, be courteous.

viz., of a believing husband and unbelieving wife. Although, in a sense, "the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband" (1 Cor. vii. 14), yet not in such a sense as for them to be called conjoint possessors of eternal life. It seems best, therefore, to suppose that the "grace (or dower) of life" which husband and wife hold, not only in common, but *conjointly*, is life in the *natural* sense. This "grace," this mysterious and divine gift—not apart from one another, but conjointly—they are privileged by the Creator's primeval benediction (Gen. i. 28) to transmit. They have the power (no Archangel has the like) to bring human beings into existence. And in consideration that such is the dignity and the intention of marriage, a man may well be called upon to revere his partner in the great prerogative.

That your prayers be not hindered — i.e., the husbands' prayers, not necessarily their prayers *with* their wives. It is easy to feel how the consciousness of having treated a wife with less awe than is indicated by the foregoing words would clog the man's prayers, whether for himself or for his wife's conversion—the latter being, probably, what St. Peter chiefly meant. Very likely he had in view what St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. vii. 5.

(8) Finally, be ye all. — A return from the special to the general. St. Peter has not, however, forgotten the *purpose* with which the former rules were given; his thought is still how to produce

a right impression on the unbelieving world, although some of these injunctions touch only *internal* relations between members of the Church. "By this shall *all men*," says our Lord, "know that ye are my disciples, if he have love *one to another*" (John xiii. 35); and, again, "That *they* all may be *one* . . . that the *world* may believe that thou hast sent me" (John xvii. 21). Accordingly, this verse, like verses 1 and 7, is attached to chap. ii. 13, and should be translated, *Finally, being all.*

Of one mind.—Or, *unanimous*. Though the Greek word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, the duty is enjoined often, e.g., Rom. xii. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2. It involves an agreement not only in doctrine but in practical aims, the affections of all being in the same direction. This unanimity requires *expression* to be conscious, and therefore it strikes at the root of the reserve by which Christian people do not open out their hearts to each other in the matter of religion. Such unity of mind is no product of indifference, which Leighton describes as "not a knitting together, but a freezing together, as cold congregates all bodies how heterogeneous soever, sticks, stones, and water."

Having compassion one of another.—Literally, *sympathetic*. The word "compassion" has lost the meaning which it once had, and signifies little more than pity. Here the command includes the "rejoicing with them

⁽⁹⁾ not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing :

but contrariwise blessing ; knowing that ye are there-

that do rejoice," as much as the "weeping with them that weep" (Rom. xii. 26). The same word only occurs again in Heb. iv. 15 ; x. 34.

Love as brethren.—Again a single adjective, *fraternal*, or, loving the brethren. For the meaning see chap. i. 22, Notes.

Be pitiful.—Rather (omitting the word "be"), *tender-hearted*. So it is translated in Eph. iv. 32, the only other place where it occurs. It differs from "sympathetic" in being limited to yearnings over the afflicted. Strangely enough, in profane Greek, the word is only found to mean "*strong-hearted*."

Be courteous.—The injunction is so charming, and so appropriate in the mouth of St. Peter, that one is almost loth to correct the reading, and substitute (undoubtedly the right word) *humble-minded*. This adjective brings us back to that mutual *subjection* and complaisance which is the main subject of all these rules. Comp. also chap. v. 5.

⁽⁹⁾ **Not rendering.**—So far St. Peter has been speaking of *internal* conduct. The two last adjectives however, lead gradually into the wider field of conduct, and probably now he is thinking solely of relation to the adverse world. Among the Christians surely there would be no "evil" or "railing" to *provoke* a retort! "Evil," in act ; "railing," in word. (See chap. ii. 23, and Rom. xii. 17.)

But contrariwise blessing.—No doubt a reminiscence of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.

44). The word "blessing" here is not substantive, but a participle, opposed to "rendering:" "not rendering them evil or railing, but on the contrary blessing them." Though the word is chosen as the exact opposite of the bad *language* used against the Christians, "blessing" may perhaps involve the opposite of unkind *action* as well. It is used for the conferring of *benefits* : (1) spiritual, in Acts iii. 26 ; Gal. iii. 8 ; (2) material, in 2 Cor. ix. 5. (Comp. 2 Kings v. 15 ; Joel ii. 14 ; Hag. ii. 19.)

Knowing that ye are hereunto called.—Comp. chap. ii. 21. It should be, *were called*, viz., when St. Paul and others first preached to you. What, then, does he mean that they were called to? to the foregoing, or to the following? to blessing instead of rendering evil and railing? or to receive a blessing? The comparison of chap. ii. 21 seems to support the former, for there the "hereunto" points to what preceded. The argument will then be precisely the same as in that passage: "You ought not now to shrink from so hard a duty, for you were given clearly to understand, when you were admitted into Christianity, that you would have to act thus."

That ye should inherit a blessing.—Rather, *in order that ye may inherit a blessing*. God had a purpose in calling them to so hard a task, and in now requiring of them the fulfilment of it; and that purpose is that they may receive a blessing. They must not think it an arbitrary hardship, or a restriction which will not in the

unto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For he^a that will love life, and see good days, let him re-

^a Ps. 34.
12, &c.

frain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ⁽¹¹⁾ let him eschew evil, and do good;

end be found gainful to themselves. God's full and eternal blessing is only to be obtained through such a course of self-suppression and of love even to those who hate us. The argument thus becomes more forcible, and the question which follows more appropriate, than if we adopt the other view, viz., "Bless, instead of retorting, for it is more suitable for men who are expecting to be blessed."

⁽¹⁰⁾ **For.**—St. Peter will show that he is not going beyond his book when he says that the blessing is only to be obtained by those who bless.

He that will love life.—The "will" here is not merely the future tense, but "he that hath a mind to love life." St. Peter's quotation, from Ps. xxxiv. 12--16, is not exact, according to either Septuagint or Hebrew, but the divergence is probably not due to a confusion of memory, but (as often) designed to bring out an additional significance. The Psalmist had asked merely, "What man is he that lusteth to live?" and he promises merely long life to self-restraint. The Apostle asks, Who cares to have a life *worth having*, a life which makes a man *glad to live*? This is the "blessing" spoken of in verse 9—not simply everlasting life, but a life of unruffled happiness. (Comp. Ps. cxxxiii. 3.) This healthy enjoyment of life, the opposite of a morbid craving for death (see Eccles. ii. 17), is implied

to be competent for any person to attain who "wills."

"Serene will be our days, and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."

See good days.—"See" in the same sense as—e.g., Ps. xxvii. 13; John iii. 3; Heb. xi. 5—for to "experience"—consciously to enjoy or to suffer, as the case may be.

Let him refrain.—Literally, *let him stop*. The evil word is on the very tip of his tongue.

No guile.—"Guile" is often used, in a very wide sense, of almost anything wrong (see chap. ii. 22); but here, probably, the distinction is that "evil" means open railing and bitter speech, while "guile" may mean the words which are "softer than butter, having war in his heart" (Ps. lv. 21).

⁽¹¹⁾ **Let him eschew evil.**—Literally, *swerve out of the way from evil*. The two former clauses dealt with the domain of *word*; these two with the domain of *action*. It suits St. Peter's intention better to take the verse, not as an exhortation to virtue in general, but as an instruction how to behave under provocation and in danger. The "good" which the man is to do is what is *kind*, not merely what is virtuous; and so, by contrast, the "evil" to be eschewed probably means chiefly what is *malicious*.

Seek peace, and ensue it.—"As much as in *you* lieth," says St. Paul, "live peaceably with all

let him seek peace, and ensue it. ⁽¹²⁾ For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears are

¹ Gr.
upon.

open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against¹ them that do evil.
⁽¹³⁾ And who *is* he that

men." It is to be a matter of diligent *search*; and if it seems to flee away it is to be "ensued"—i.e., pursued. The active practical measures here prescribed confirm the surmise that "blessing" in verse 8 covered more ground than benedictory prayers.

⁽¹²⁾ For.—Or, *Because*. In the Psalm there is no such connecting particle, but it is involved in the juxtaposition. The sense that the Lord's eyes are over you is a sufficient reason for self-restraint under provocation: especially, perhaps, when we see that by "the Lord" St. Peter understands Jesus Christ. That this is the case is clear from his use of the same Psalm in chap. ii. 3. If Christ, the model of meekness under persecution (chap. ii. 23), is watching, we not only *need* no passionate self-defence, but should be ashamed to use it. Was St. Peter thinking how once, while he himself was cursing and swearing at those who accused him of being a Christian, he felt the eyes of the Lord turn upon him? The thought of His eyes being over us is chiefly that of guardianship.

Open unto their prayers.—Rather, *are towards their prayer*—i.e., directed towards it. Here, as in chap. ii. 3, the Prayer Book version has influenced our translation.

Against them that do evil.—There is no difference in the Greek between this preposition and that just rendered "over." *But the countenance of the Lord is over them that do evil things.* He marks what

they are doing. This is sufficient comfort when men injure us (chap. ii. 23); sufficient warning not to injure in return. It is instructive now to turn and see the circumstances in which this lovely Psalm was composed. The moment was one of David's extremest peril among an infuriated heathen population. The danger and dread he was in are shown in Ps. lvi. Yet nothing can be brighter and more serene than Ps. xxxiv. He had obtained life and days; and it was all through confidence in God on the one hand, and inoffensive self-submission on the other. Had he used violence—"shown spirit," as we say—like the "young lions," he would have come worse off. It seems to be for this cause that St. Peter deemed the Psalm so appropriate to his readers, misjudged and suspiciously watched (Ps. lvi. 5, 6) by unbelievers, who only waited the opportunity to shed their blood (*ibid.* 1, 2). But the striking change is that, whereas David's trust in Jehovah was a trust simply in the Eternal Being without distinction of Persons, St. Peter bids the Hebrews of Asia read that Psalm into an act of faith in Jesus. We shall see the same thing in verse 15, as we saw it in chap. ii. 3. The force of the change will be felt by any one who reads through that Psalm, substituting (like the Rheims version) "our Lord" for "the Lord."

(13—iv. 6) EXHORTATION TO KEEP

will harm you, if ye be
followers of that which is

good? ⁽¹⁴⁾ But and if ye
suffer for righteousness'

A PURE CONSCIENCE.—It is the only charm against persecution. It is like Christ to suffer with a good conscience; and He had His reward for it, in bringing us, and even the spirits of men who had died impenitent, to God thereby. It is the very meaning of the baptism by which He saves us. To feel its beauty and safety, we have but to consider the ugliness and danger of our former life.

⁽¹³⁾ **And who is he that shall harm you?**—There is always a ring of scornful assurance in an interrogative introduced by "and:" "And who, pray?"

If ye be followers.—Rather, *if ye make yourselves zealots*. The phrase looks on into the future; not merely "if at present ye be." And the word which means "follower" (*i.e.*, imitator) is here a false reading for *zelotes*, the name by which St. Peter's lesser namesake among the Apostles was known, probably because of his enthusiastic attachment to the old or to the new Law. The same *zelotes* is found in Tit. ii. 14 and elsewhere. The translation, "of Him which is good," is perfectly possible, but does not quite so well suit the context. Some writers (Leighton among them) take the verse to mean, or at least to include, that when men see the goodness and loving-kindness of our lives they will not be *disposed* to hurt us. This thought is, however, foreign to the passage. It means that men and devils may try their worst, as they did on Christ, and cannot harm us.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **But if ye suffer.**—The old-fashioned phrase would read more intelligibly thus: *Nay, if ye should even suffer*. So far are men's attempts to "harm" us (by acts of malice to property or good name, &c.) from really injuring us, that even if it should come to be a matter of "suffering" we are to be congratulated. What he means by this "suffering," which is so much more than being "harmed," may be seen from chaps. ii. 21; iii. 17; iv. 1, 15. He means the horrors of capital punishment. He does not speak of this as something that was already occurring, nor as though it were something immediately and certainly impending, but as a case well supposable. There had then as yet been no martyrdoms in Asia. The Letter is therefore earlier in date than the Apocalypse (Rev. ii. 13). It is a noticeable point that in all St. Paul's Epistles the word "to suffer" occurs but seven times, and nowhere twice in the same Epistle; whereas it comes twelve times in this one short Letter to St. Peter.

For righteousness' sake.—Like the "suffering wrongfully" of chap. ii. 19. It is not *as* suffering that it is valuable.

Happy are ye.—Quite the right word: yet the use of it obscures the obvious reference to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 10). The reference to it is all the clearer in the Greek from the significant way in which St. Peter leaves his sentence incomplete, merely giving the catchword of the beatitude. We might represent it to ourselves by putting "Blessed" in inverted commas, and a dash after it. He

Chaps. iii. 13 —
iv. 6. Conscience
of integrity
is the secret
of a happy life,
and the secret
of Christ's
triumphs.

sake, happy
are ye: and
be not afraid^a
of their ter-
ror, neither

^a Isa. 8.
12, 13.

be troubled; ⁽¹⁵⁾ but sanc-
tify the Lord God in
your hearts: and be ready
always to give an answer
to every man that asketh

makes sure his readers will catch the allusion. There is no part of our Lord's discourses which seems (from the traces in the earliest Christian literature) to have taken so rapid and firm a hold on the Christian conscience as the Sermon on the Mount.

Be not afraid of their terror. — Here the translators might with advantage have kept the same word, and said (as in the original passage from which St. Peter is quoting, Isa. viii. 12), *Fear ye not their fear*—i.e., the thing which makes them fear; do not regard with dread the same object as they do. In the original, the persons whose fears Isaiah and the faithful Jews are not to fear are those who were in dread of Syria and Israel. Here the persons are not named; but, of course, according to this interpretation, "they" cannot be the enemies who try to harm the Christians, but, if any one, those of the Christians who, for fear of man, were beginning to abandon Christianity. The intention, however, is not to press this clause for its own sake, but to throw greater force upon the clause which begins the next verse. It argues carelessness about the passage in Isaiah to interpret, "Be not afraid of the fear which your foes strike into you."

⁽¹⁵⁾ **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.** — The tense of this and the two preceding imperatives shows that St. Peter

meant this for advice to be acted upon at the moment of being called on to suffer. The passage, as it stands in Isaiah, runs literally, "Jehovah Sabaoth, Him shall ye sanctify, and He (shall be) your fear, and He your dread." It becomes, therefore, very striking when we find that, without a shadow of doubt, the right reading here is, *But sanctify the Lord the Christ in your hearts*. How is it possible, except on the supposition that the Catholic doctrine is really a statement of fact, that a Jew like St. Peter should ever have come to apply to a Man whom he had known familiarly, a Man who had served him at table and had washed his feet, the words which Isaiah had said about the "Lord of Hosts?" This passage immediately precedes that which was quoted in chap. ii. 8, and (like that) is not caught up at random, but as coming in the great Immanuel passage. That presence of God which was the palladium of Israel in the days of Hezekiah has found fulfilment in "the Christ" now given. But what is meant by "sanctifying" Him? The phrase is not elsewhere used in the New Testament, except in the Lord's Prayer; but in the Old Testament see Lev. x. 3; Isa. xxix. 23; Ezek. xxxviii. 23. As to "glorify" God means (in word and deed) to recognise His glorious perfections; as to "magnify" Him means to recognise His greatness; as to "justify"

you a reason of the hope | that is in you with meek-

Him means to recognise His inherent justice; so to "sanctify" Him means to recognise, in word and deed, His full holiness, and therefore to treat Him with due awe. This not only substitutes the fear of God for the fear of man (since they mutually exclude each other), but enforces purity of life, thus catching up again "that which is good" and "for righteousness' sake." This, adds St. Peter, is to be done "in your hearts." This does not mean simply "with your hearts," or "from your hearts" (i.e., inwardly, or, with all sincerity and devotion), but it signifies the local habitation *where* the Christ is to be thus recognised. That is to say: St. Peter, like St. Paul (Eph. iii. 17), acknowledges an *indwelling* of Christ in the hearts of the faithful; and this indwelling not merely subjective, consisting of their constant recollection of him, but real and objective: there He is, as in a shrine, and they must pay due reverence to His presence. The Apostle does, in fact, in those words "in your hearts," purposely call attention to the difference between Isaiah's use of the name Immanuel and the Christian meaning of it. To Isaiah, God dwelt in the midst of a people in its corporate capacity; St. Peter knew that, through the Incarnation, each individual Christian has God in him, united with him.

And be.—The better reading omits the connecting particle, so that we should put "being" instead of "and be."

Ready always to give an answer.—This is the consequence of sanctifying Christ within by the

worship of a pure life, that no moment, no questioner finds us unprepared to speak with freedom of our hope in Him. The word for "answer" here is *apologia*, an apology; not of course, in the modern sense of an *excuse*, but a defence, the reply of an accused person, like the well-known *Apologia Socratis*, or the great modern *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, or the works from which Tertullian, Athenagoras, St. Justin, and others are called "The Apologists." It does not mean that every person is bound to be able to state intellectually the nature and grounds of the Christian creed, though such a duty may, perhaps, be fairly *deduced* from the text. It does not say that every Christian ought to know why he is a Christian, but that every Christian's own life ought to be so free from taint, so conscious of Christ enshrined within, as to cause him no misgiving in defending the faith from the calumnies (see chap. ii. 12) brought against it. The constant readiness, or freedom from encumbrance of sin, is the main point, "which intimates," says Leighton, "it was not always to be *done* to every one, but we, being *ready* to do, are to consider when, and to whom, and how far." Consciousness of impurity of life shuts a man's mouth from defending Christian morality.

That asketh you a reason.—Rather, *that demandeth of you an account*. It does not mean inquirers about Christian doctrine, but those who call Christians to account for their profession of the Gospel hopes. Though it must not be exclusively so taken, St.

ness" and fear: ¹ ⁽¹⁶⁾ having
a good conscience; that,
whereas they speak evil of

a 2 Tim.
2. 25.
¹ Or, re-
verence.

you, as of evildoers, they
may be ashamed that
falsely accuse your good

Peter evidently means chiefly the being called into the law court to give account. Probably he is thinking of our Lord's charge to himself and his co-apostles, in St. Luke xii. 11. (Comp. Matt. x. 5, 16, 19.)

Of the hope that is in you.

—More literally, *with regard to the hope that is in you: i.e., with regard to the Christianity in which you share.* It is, of course, quite a modern application to the text to see in this anything of the individual assurance of salvation. However fairly it may be argued that a Christian ought to know why he, personally, expects to be saved, it is not the thought of St. Peter here. Christianity is here called a hope, rather than a faith, as in Acts xxviii. 20, Col. i. 23, because, especially in times of persecution, so much of our creed has a future tinge.

With meekness and fear.—

There ought certainly to be added a warning *But* before these words. The readiness of the Christian's defence of himself and the Church from all moral aspersions is not to be marred by any self-exaltation or improper confidence. Archbishop Leighton says, "Not, therefore, blustering and flying out into invectives because he hath the better on it against any man that questions him touching this hope, as some think themselves certainly authorised to use rough speech because they plead for truth. On the contrary, so much the rather study meekness, for the glory and

advantage of the truth." The "fear" will be, in large measure, a dread of overstepping the bounds of truth or modesty in speaking of the Christian morals. The Acts of the Martyrs, with all their splendour, too often show how St. Peter's cautious *But* was needed.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Having a good conscience.**—This strikes the keynote of the paragraph. How vigorously St. Peter repeats it! "Zealous for that which is good," "for righteousness' sake," "*sanctify the Lord,*" "with meekness and fear," "a good conscience," "your good conversation."

Whereas.—The word means precisely the same as in chap. ii. 12, where see Note.

They speak evil of you, as of evil doers.—Tischendorf follows one of the best manuscripts and the Peschito-Syriac version in reading *whereas ye are evil spoken of.* It is easy to see how the ordinary reading would come in, from the similarity of chap. ii. 12; and we may pretty confidently adopt the emendation. In any case, the words "as of evil doers" should be removed.

They may be ashamed (or, *confounded*).—When? St. Peter is evidently thinking of the Christian at the bar of the curator or pro-consul, and the mortification of the *delator*, or spy, who had given information against him.

Falsely accuse.—Literally, *insult*, that is, "odiously calumniate." The word occurs again only in Luke vi. 28.

conversation in Christ.
 (17) For *it is* better, if the
 will of God be so, that ye

suffer for well doing, than
 for evil doing. (18) For
 Christ also hath once suf-

In Christ.—This is the nearest approach in St. Peter to a use of this word as a proper name. Still, it is not so. Other Hebrews, he reminds them in this word, were safe from persecution only by rejecting the national hope of a Messiah. It is simply because these men are "in Christ" that the heathens (perhaps also their fellow Jews) insult their conversation. The phrase "in Christ," i.e., as members of the Church, occurs again in chap. v. 10, 14, and the thought is common enough in St. John (e.g., 1 John v. 20), but it does not come in 2 Peter, nor in Hebrews, St. James, or St. Jude. Of course, St. Paul's writings teem with it. It contains the converse side of the Incarnation doctrine to that involved in verse 15; we not only have the whole Christ dwelling in us, but He embraces us all; "Ye in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20).

(17) **For it is better.**—There is a kind of ironical suppression in this comparison.

If the will of God be so.—A strikingly reverent phrase in the original, *If the will of God should will it*. This is, of course, to be taken only with the word "suffer," which itself means, as in verse 14, to suffer *capitally*. St. Peter is thinking of the legal process of verses 15, 16, coming to a verdict of "guilty." He was himself daily expecting such a death.

For well doing.—Better, perhaps, *as well doers*. It does not necessarily mean, in the Greek, that the well doing was the *reason* of

the suffering, but simply that it accompanied it.

(18) **For Christ also.**—This gives a reason for thinking it no such formidable thing to suffer when one is innocent. It has been tried before, and the precedent is encouraging. "It is," says Arch bishop Leighton, "some known ease to the mind, in any distress, to look upon examples of the like or greater distress in present or former times . . . As the example and company of the saints in suffering is very considerable, so that of Christ is more than any other, yea, than all the rest together." If King Messiah (note that he does not call Him Jesus) could endure to be cut off (but not for Himself), was it for any one who clung to the promises to shrink from the like test?

Hath once suffered.—Even if we retain the verb, it should be *suffered*, not "hath suffered," it is all past now; but much the better reading is *died*, which leaves no doubt about the meaning of "suffering" in verse 17. And this He did "once." In this significant word St. Peter strikes out the main argument of a great portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. vii. 27; ix. 27; x. 10). The thought that Christ suffered or died "once" conveys comfort to these Christians for several reasons: (1) because His death has, once for all, taken all terror from an innocent death; (2) because no Christian will have to die more than one death; (3) because one death, so soon over for

ferred for sins, the just for | the unjust, that he might

ever, contains the further idea of happiness and peace beyond. The word "to die" in Greek is often used in a penal sense—"to be put to death"—and is to be so taken here.

For sins.—When the Apostle says "Christ *also*," he raises a comparison between Christ and the Christian martyr. Now the parallel does not merely consist in the fact that both "suffer" or are put to death. Both are put to death but once. Both are put to death innocent: the martyr "while well-doing," Christ acknowledged to be "just." But this does not exhaust the likeness. The Messiah is said to be put to death "for sins." Now this expression "for sins" (literally, *in connection with sins*) is that which is used to mean "as a sin-offering." (See Rom. viii. 3; Gal. i. 4; Heb. x. 6, 8, 18, 26; xiii. 11; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.) If, therefore, "Christ *also* was put to death as a sin-offering," it is implied that, in a sense, the Christian martyr is also a sin-offering, and (though in an infinitely lower degree) dies, like Him, "just for unjust." This is a fresh encouragement to St. Peter's first readers to meet death bravely. In what sense they can be sacrifices for other men's sins we shall consider presently.

The just for the unjust.—That preposition "for" contains a volume of theology. Though it is not so weak a word as the one which occurs in the phrase "for sins," it does not express the notion of *substitution*. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 21.) It is simply "on behalf of." As a substitute for the unjust, we make bold to say that

(according to Holy Scripture, and the primitive fathers, and the conscience of man) neither the martyrs nor Christ Himself could have made atonement; "on behalf of" other men, the martyrs could very easily be said to die. It is, perhaps, a pity that the definite article has been inserted in our version. Though, of course, our Lord is the only human being who can in strictness be called just, St. Peter means the word here to cover others besides Him; "Christ *also* died, a just man on behalf of unjust men."

That he might bring us to God.—Or, better, *bring you*; though it cannot be stated peremptorily in this case that such is the reading. (See Note on chap. i. 12.) The substantive derived from this verb appears as "access" in Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12. A most important doctrinal passage. St. Peter says not a word about the Atonement in its effect upon the mind of the Father towards man. Though there is, no doubt, some deep truth in the phrase which occurs in the second of the Thirty-nine Articles—"suffered . . . to reconcile His Father to us"—it is a side on which the New Testament writers do not much dwell. It is too high a mystery for our minds to reach. The phrase is itself not Scriptural. The New Testament, as has been well pointed out, never even speaks of the reconciliation as *mutual*. The quarrel is treated as one-sided, so far, at least, as in connection with the Atonement. When, then, our Lord was put to death as a sacrifice for sins—a righteous man on behalf of **un-righteous men**—St. Peter explains

bring us to God,^a being ^{a. 2 Cor. 5. 18.} | put to death in the flesh,

these terms by the expression "in order that He might bring you to God," not "in order that He might bring God to you." The voluntary death of a righteous man upon the cross, in the calm calculation that nothing else would so attract sinful men to Himself, and thus to the Father who sent Him (John xii. 32) —this is the aspect of the Atonement which St. Peter sets forth. Perhaps on another occasion he might have set forth a different aspect; but now he is still thinking of the effect of Christian conduct upon the outer world, and his object is to make the Christians feel that they too can, in their measure, bring the unjust, the persecuting heathens and Jews, to God by innocent and voluntary deaths. Thus their deaths are carrying on the work of reconciliation; and what Christ did for them ("died for you") they do for others. Well then may they be called blessed when they suffer (verse 14).

Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.—The interpreters of this sentence may be classified in two groups, according as they understand the fact referred to in the second clause to be (1) the resurrection of Christ, or (2) something which took place between His death and His resurrection. Now, if we could accept the translation in the English Bible, "by the Spirit," it would be pretty obvious to accept (1); and we should point to such passages as Rom. i. 4, viii. 11, to show that the resurrection of Christ was due to the action of the Holy Ghost. It would not be possible to follow Oecumenius,

Calvin, Beza, and Leighton, in taking "the flesh" to mean generally the human nature of Christ, and "the Spirit" by which He was quickened to mean His own divine nature; for Christ has a human spirit as truly as a human body and soul, and it would be heresy to call His divine nature His spirit, as though it occupied in Him the position which is occupied in men by the human spirit. But, as a matter of fact, we cannot translate it "quickened by the Spirit." It is literally, *killed indeed in flesh, but quickened in spirit*. Now, how can "quickened in spirit" be a description of the Resurrection? It cannot be answered (with Huther) that the "spirit" here means the resurrection body; for though that is indeed a spiritual body, yet it is playing fast and loose with words to identify "spirit" and "spiritual body." If the resurrection body be only spirit, where is the resurrection? Neither would the antithesis be correct between "flesh" and "spirit," if by "spirit" is meant the new form of body given at the Resurrection. Or, again, taking "spirit" in its true sense of the inward incorporeal self, could the Resurrection be described as a quickening of it? True, the spirit itself will *gain* in some way by its re-incorporation (2 Cor. v. 4); but as the spirit has been alive all along, but the flesh has been dead, the contrast would be very forced to express death and resurrection by "killed in flesh, but quickened in spirit," instead of saying rather "killed in flesh, but soon quickened in the same." Thus we are driven to (2). As a matter of

but quickened by the | Spirit: ⁽¹⁹⁾ by which also

fact, there is nothing in the words to suggest an interval between the quickening and the killing. They both are parts of the same act, and both are used to explain the word "died." It is a kind of apology for having used the word death at all (for we have seen that St. Peter's object is to help the future martyrs to despise death, verse 14): "Died, do I say? yes, killed in flesh, it is true, but actually quickened to fresh energies in spirit by that very act of death." (Comp. our Lord's charge to the Twelve, Matt. x. 28.) But how can His death be said to have been a quickening of His human spirit? Some take the word to mean simply "preserved alive," a word almost identical, being used apparently in that sense in Luke xvii. 33, Acts vii. 19. The notion, however, would be too weak here; some energetic action seems required to balance "being killed." That St. Peter is speaking of something not altogether peculiar to Christ, but common to men, may still be inferred from his saying "Christ *also*." The doctrine, then, seems to be (as Bengel and others say) that the spirit, set free from the body, immediately receives new life, as it were, thereby. To purely spiritual realities it becomes alive in a manner which was impossible while it was united to the flesh. The new powers are exemplified in what follows immediately. So long as Christ, so long as any man, is alive in the flesh, he cannot hold converse with spirits as such; but the moment death severs flesh and spirit, the spirit can deal with other spirits, which Christ proceeded forthwith to do.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **By which.**—If "by the Spirit" had been right in the former verse, this translation might have stood here, though the word is literally *in*; for "*in*" is often used to mean "*in the power of*," "*on the strength of*:" *e.g.*, Rom. viii. 15. But as that former rendering is untenable, we must here keep strictly to *in which*—*i.e.*, in spirit. This might mean either of two things: (1) "*spiritually speaking*," "so far as thought and sympathy goes," as, for instance, 1 Cor. v. 3, Col. ii. 5; or else (2) "*in spirit*," as opposed to "*in the body*"—*i.e.*, "*out of the body*" (2 Cor. xii. 2; comp. Rev. i. 10), as a disembodied spirit. We adopt the latter rendering without hesitation, for reasons which will be clearer in the next Note.

He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.—There are two main ways of interpreting this mysterious passage. (1) The spirits are understood as being *now* in prison, in consequence of having rejected His preaching to them while they were still on earth. According to this interpretation—which has the support of such names as Pearson, Hammond, Barrow, and Leighton (though he afterwards modified his opinion), among ourselves, besides divers great theologians of other countries, including St. Thomas Aquinas on the one hand and Beza on the other—it was "*in spirit*," *i.e.*, mystically speaking, our Lord Himself who, in and through the person of Noah, preached repentance to the old world. Thus the passage is altogether dissociated from the doctrine of the descent into hell; and the sense (though not the Greek)

he went and preached^a unto the spirits in prison;^b
^a ch. 4. 6.
^b 2 Pet. 2. 4.
 (20) which sometime were disobedient, when once the

would be better expressed by writing, *He had gone and preached unto the spirits (now) in prison.* In this case, however, it is difficult to see the purpose of the digression, or what could have brought the subject into St. Peter's mind. (2) The second interpretation—which is that of (practically) all the Fathers, and of Calvin, Luther (finally), Bellarmine, Bengel, and of most modern scholars—refers the passage to what our Lord did while His body was dead. This is the most natural construction to put upon the words “in which also” (*i.e.*, in spirit). It thus gives point to the saying that He was “quickened in spirit,” which would otherwise be left very meaningless. The “spirits” here will thus correspond with “in spirit” there. It is the only way to assign any intelligible meaning to the words “He went and” to suppose that He “went” straight from His quickening in spirit—*i.e.*, from His death. It is far the most natural thing to suppose that the spirits were in prison at the time when Christ went and preached to them. We take it, then, to mean that, directly Christ's human spirit was disengaged from the body, He gave proof of the new powers of purely spiritual action thus acquired by going off to the place, or state, in which other disembodied spirits were (who would have been incapable of receiving direct impressions from Him had He not Himself been in the purely spiritual condition), and conveyed to them certain tidings: He “preached” unto them. What was the sub-

stance of this preaching we are not here told, the word itself (which is not the same as, *e.g.*, in chap. i. 25) only means to publish or proclaim like a crier or herald; and as the spirits are said to have been disobedient and in prison, some have thought that Christ went to proclaim to them the certainty of their damnation! The notion has but to be mentioned to be rejected with horror; but it may be pointed out also that in chap. iv. 6, which refers back to this passage, it is distinctly called a “gospel;” and it would be too grim to call that a gospel which (in Calvin's words) “made it more clear and patent to them that they were shut out from all salvation!” He brought good tidings, therefore, of some kind to the “prison” and the spirits in it. And this “prison” must not be understood (with Bp. Browne, *Articles*, p. 95) as merely “a place of safe keeping,” where good spirits might be as well as bad, though etymologically this is imaginable. The word occurs thirty-eight times in the New Testament in the undoubted sense of a “prison,” and not once in that of a place of protection, though twice (Rev. xviii. 2) it is used in the derived sense of “a cage.”

(20) Which sometime were disobedient.—The absence of the definite article here in the Greek (contrary to St. Peter's usage in participial sentences—*e.g.*, chap. i. 5, 7, 10, 17) makes it possible to think that the spirits mentioned in this verse are not co-extensive with those in prison. It is, literally, *to men who once upon a time were*

long-suffering of God |
waited in the days of |

Noah, while the ark was a
preparing, wherein few,

disobedient. Our Lord preached to the whole class of spirits in prison, of all times and races; and then, to magnify the bounty of this act, St. Peter instances a particular group of them, who were the most marked criminals of any whose case suggested a useful application. He has a reason for using the word "disobedient." It would not describe *all* sinners, but those who had heard and been convinced by the word of God, but refused to accept it. (See Note on verse 2.) This was the case with those to whom Noah preached (2 Pet. ii. 5); and, in spite of their "disobedience," Christ, after His innocent and sacrificial death, went in spirit and preached a gospel to them. Now, let it be recollected that St. Peter's object through the whole of this section is to encourage the Hebrew Christians to be ready, through a good conscience, for a brave martyrdom, if need be. They are to think how their deaths, like Christ's, may bring their persecutors to God. Nay—he seems to imply—their very spirits going forth into the world of spirits may conceivably carry a gospel of some kind even to Hebrew relatives who have passed away, like those Antediluvians, in the "disobedience" which was characteristic of the Jews. St. Clement of Alexandria, who derives the notion from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, gives his belief that the Apostles also, when they died, preached to those who had died before them; and though there is little that throws light on our occupation in the intermediate state, it can hardly be pronounced impos-

sible for some spirits to be allowed to follow Christ's example there by preaching to spirits in prison. Many expositors, afraid of the consequences of admitting that there could be a possible gospel for men who died impenitent, have supposed that the imprisoned spirits to whom Christ went were the less wicked people destroyed by the Flood; others that they were those who had some motions of penitence when the rain began to fall; but these ideas are foreign to the text, which only tells us that they "were disobedient," and adds nothing to extenuate their crime. They are a typical instance of men who died "as evil doers" (verse 17).

When once the longsuffering of God waited.—The word "once" has no business in the text, originating only in an ingenious but unnecessary guess of Erasmus. The clause serves to heighten the guilt of the poor sinners to whom Christ preached in prison. Not only did they die a judicial death for their extreme sensuality (Gen. vi. 3, 11), not only did they disobey an isolated call to repentance from Noah, but continuously, through all the time of the building of the ark (traditionally 120 years) they went on refusing to listen. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed without a preacher to warn them, the Canaanites were annihilated without an offer of repentance, but these abandoned Antediluvians sinned in spite of the long ministry of Noah, and died impenitent. Both their wickedness and God's longsuffering with them were embodied in Hebrew proverbs,

that is, eight souls were | saved by water. ⁽²¹⁾ The

which St. Peter's readers would know, and yet Christ had a gospel for them.

While the ark.—Better, *while an ark*. It does not merely describe the period of the disobedience, but rather changes the thought altogether. We now turn from the destruction of the majority to the salvation of the few.

Wherein.—Literally, *whereinto*—i.e., by getting into which.

Few, that is, eight souls were saved.—The mention of disobedience calls up to the Apostle's mind at once the vast number of Hebrews who rejected the gospel of Christ. As in chap. ii. 4 *et seq.*, so here, he establishes the readers against the thought, "Can I be right and all these people wrong?" by showing that from the beginning it was always a small number who accepted salvation, and they should naturally expect it to be so now. It is better to be one of the eight in the ark than of the many disobedient in the water.

By water.—Or, *through water*. The very water which drowned the disobedient was the instrument of saving to those who believed, for it floated their ark. It cannot be denied that this is a little forced. So, in the same way, in chap. ii. 8, the same stone is to some a sanctuary, to some a stumbling-block. This pregnant word "water" leads on to the next thought.

⁽²¹⁾ **The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.**—There are two undoubted false readings in this sentence which must be cleared

away before we can consider the meaning. First, the word "whereunto" is a mistake for the more difficult *which*; and second, it should be *you*, not "us." We may then translate, either, *Which baptism also, in antitype, doth now save you*, or else, *Which (water) also, in antitype, now saveth you—baptism*. The first is less likely, both from the order of the words in Greek, and also because of the difficulty of calling the Flood point-blank a baptism. According to the second translation, the water through which Noah was saved is said in the present day ("now," as opposed to "in the days of Noe") to save *us* (the "you" is emphatic). It does so, in the same sense as we might say, for instance, that the sprinkling of the paschal blood saves *us*: that is to say, it foreshadowed something which does as a fact save *us*. This St. Peter expresses by the adjective which may be rendered "in antitype." The thing it represented is Christian baptism. Where, then, lies the likeness between the two? Not merely in the identity of the element water, which serves but to arrest the fancy, and make one think of the deeper resemblance. One obvious point is that the number of persons accepting the proffered salvation at the present crisis is, as in the days of Noe, very small compared with those who reject it. The main thought, however, is not of the Christians, as a body or family (like Noe's), being saved while others are lost. For each individual by himself there is a meaning in his baptism which is prefigured by the Flood;

like figure whereunto even | baptism doth also now

and the explanation of baptism which follows, and the opening of the next chapter, show that the Apostle was thinking chiefly of this individual application. As the passage of Israel through the Red Sea is described as a baptism (1 Cor. x. 2) because it marked their transition from the state of bondage to a new national life, and left their enemies destroyed in the water, so Noe's safe passage through the Flood is a type of baptism, because it was a regeneration of humanity, it was a destruction of the carnal, sensual element (Gen. vi. 3, "he also is flesh"), it washed the human race from its pollutions, and man rose to a new and more spiritual existence for the time being, with the bow for a sign of a perpetual covenant made. So baptism is a destruction and death to the flesh, but a new life to the spirit. It must be observed how carefully St. Peter expresses the *permanent* effect of baptism by the present tense "saveth:" not "saved you," nor "hath saved you;" it is a living and ever-present fact, the "*everlasting* benediction of His heavenly washing;" it washes the neophyte not from past sins only, but from those which he afterwards commits, if only he still repents and believes.

Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.—The Apostle is not cautioning his readers against the thought that baptism acted *ex opere operato*, as a charm, but he is telling them, on the contrary, that it is no external rite. He was writing to Jews, who were very familiar with ceremonial

washings, or "baptisings," which though they *symbolised* a cleansing from sin, really *effected* nothing but to make the skin less dirty.

But the answer of a good conscience toward God.—An expression which has caused almost as much difficulty as any in the New Testament. The difficulty lay especially in two points: first, that the context was so involved as to give little indication what to *expect*; secondly, that the Greek word (*eperôtêma*) which is here rendered "answer" is so seldom found, and might easily take such various shades of meaning. (1) Touching the word itself, we may at once reject the translation "answer," for it could only mean an "answer" in that sense in which "question" and "answer" are identical, both of them being "the thing asked," the subject matter of both being the same; but so cumbersome a sense is not in keeping here. (2) Next we may consider the attractive theory that it means a "contract." The form in which a contract was made was as follows: N says to M, "Dost thou promise?" and M answers, "I promise." Now, in Byzantine Law-Greek such a contract is known as an *eperôtêma*, or "questionment," from the question with which proceedings began. And, as a matter of fact, the baptismal covenant has undoubtedly been entered upon from the earliest times with just such questions and answers. Tertullian speaks of this (*De Corona*, chap. iii.) as an ancient custom in the end of the second century. There are, however, three serious objections: first, that "the contract

save^a us (not the putting | ^{a Tit. 3. 5.} away of the filth of the

of a good conscience" is a somewhat vague and imperfect phrase, and far more difficult in Greek than in English; secondly, that there is no trace of the legal term *eperôtêma* until centuries after the date of St. Peter, or of Tertullian either; thirdly, that had *eperôtêma* been a recognised term for a "contract" in St. Peter's time, we should have been certain to find this explanation in some of the Greek Fathers. (3) The usual meaning of the verb would lead us towards a less unsatisfactory conclusion. *Eperôtân* is "to put a question" for further information's sake. And we may remark that the order of the Greek would strongly suggest that the words "toward God" should be attached (in spite of the analogy of Acts xxiv. 16) not to "good conscience," but to the word *eperôtêma*. Now, there is a constant use of the verb *eperôtân* in the Old Testament in connection with the name of God. In Josh. ix. 14, Judg. i. 1, xviii. 5, and many other places, it means "to consult God," "to inquire of the Lord," to seek to Him for direction. Or, with a slightly different turn, it is used, as in Isa. xix. 3, lxxv. 1, for "to inquire after God," in which sense it finds its way into the New Testament in Rom. x. 20. Thus baptism would be said to be, "not the flesh's putting away of dirt (for so it might be turned, though it is somewhat forced), but a good conscience's inquiry at the hands of God," or "a good conscience's inquiry after God." Observe that if the "good conscience" is the agent in this transaction, as here expressed, St. Peter would

recognise (as in Luke viii. 15) the man's happy state of soul *before* baptism, and baptism would be the mode of his further approach to God. That this is good doctrine cannot be denied. (4) There is, however, another version for which a still better case can be made out: viz., "demand." It is true that the verb *eperôtân* more frequently means "to ask" a question than "to ask" a boon, expecting a verbal response rather than a practical one; but it is once used in the New Testament in the latter sense (Matt. xvi. 1), and in the Old Testament also (as Ps. cxxxvii. 3). And the only other instance of the word *eperôtêma* in inspired literature makes for this view. This occurs in Dan. iv. 17, where the English has "demand," and the Latin *petitio*. There is, indeed, almost as much difficulty in ascertaining the exact sense there as here; but, on the whole, it seems to mean the "demand" for Nebuchadnezzar's degradation. This was evidently the meaning assigned to our present passage by the anonymous Father in the Catena, for, wrongly joining the words "through the resurrection" with *eperôtêma*, he says: "It teacheth also how we beseech of Him; and how? by confessing the resurrection of the Lord." Taking, then, the rendering "demand," a further question arises: Does St. Peter mean that baptism is the demand (made by God or the Church upon the man) for a good conscience towards God? or the demand made by a good conscience upon God, without specifying the demand? or finally, the demand upon God

flesh, but the answer of a | good conscience toward

(made by the man) *for* a good conscience? Of these the second seems the weakest, because it leaves the nature of the demand so open, and because the notion of a good conscience *previous* to baptism is less suited to the context. The first would indeed give a vigorous sense. St. Peter would then be saying, "Have a good conscience (verse 16), for, besides all else, it is your baptismal obligation, and in defiling conscience you forfeit your baptismal salvation;" but it labours under the defect of connecting "toward God" with "conscience" instead of with "demand," and it is imperfect, moreover, in not demanding a good conscience toward men as well as toward God. The last seems both the clearest in itself, the best antithesis to the balancing clause, and the most in keeping with the context. It will then be: "Noah's flood, in antitype, to this day saves you—that is to say, baptism, which is no cleansing of the skin from dirt, but an application to God for a clear conscience." A "good conscience," in this case, will not mean an honest frame of mind, but a consciousness of having nothing against you, such as would come to even the chief of sinners from the baptismal remission of sins. "Conscience" is used in this retrospective sense four times in Hebrews (chaps. ix. 9, 14, and x. 2, 22); and, indeed, in verse 16 it meant "having nothing on your mind because of the past," rather than "being sure that you *mean* well." And how well this suits the context! The Apostle, from chap. iii. 13 to chap. iv. 6, is uttering the praises of a clear conscience, and

warning from everything that could defile it. "With this," he says, "you cannot be harmed; with this you will be always ready to defend the faith when called to account. It was because he had this that Christ was able to atone for you and bring you to God, and to conduct his mission to the dead, and to give by His resurrection an efficacy to your baptism; and that baptism itself only saves you by the fact that in it you ask and receive the cleansing of the conscience."

By the resurrection.—Rightly joined in our version with "doth save." Baptism derives all its sacramental efficacy from the fact that Christ has, by the Resurrection, introduced into the world a new kind of life, which in baptism is imparted to the believer. The doctrine here approaches still nearer to that of Rom. vi. than to that of chap. i. 3. In the first chapter, the Resurrection of Christ was said to be the means and the moment of our regeneration, but baptism (though of course implied) was not mentioned, nor the death to sin. But here, as in Romans, these two take a prominent place. As humanity died to the flesh in the bad Antediluvians, and rose again, washed clean, in Noe, so to the believer there was in baptism a death to the flesh, and he rose again with a conscience washed clean through the union thereby effected with the crucified and risen Christ. Note, again, that when the Apostle speaks of glories he uses the name of Jesus; but when of sufferings, it is the title of Christ.

God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: ^a (22) who ^{a ch. 1 3; Roin. 6. 4.} is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God;

(22) **Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.**—This verse (which partakes of the character of a doxology) serves two purposes. First, it carries on the history of Jesus Christ. How carefully, in spite of what seem at first irrelevant digressions, St. Peter holds his threads. Christ's passion and death, activity among the dead, resurrection from among them, ascension into heaven, perpetual session in glory, follow one another in due order. The second purpose of the clause runs parallel to the first. St. Peter is teaching the entire conformity of the believer to the Lord. If the believer will but retain his good conscience, he may hope for a precisely similar experience. The Latin and several other good versions, together with several Latin Fathers, add a curious sentence after the words "on the right hand of God," which runs: *swallowing up death that we might be made heirs of eternal life*; but there is no sufficient authority for the sentence. The first notion of being "on the right hand of God," taken, probably, from Ps. cx. 1, seems to be that of occupying the highest post of honour possible, next after that of God—i.e., the Father—Himself. It is not necessary here to consider what else may be implied in the phrase as to the conditions of our Lord's human existence; but when we compare St. Paul's statement, in Eph. iv. 10, about His now "filling all things," we feel that these pictorial words, such as "heaven" and "right hand of God," are intended to convey the

notion that His humanity is now entirely *without* conditions, though still retaining all that is truly essential to humanity. It may be observed that, assuming (as even most sceptical critics do) the genuineness of this Epistle, we have here at first hand the deliberate evidence of one who had been perfectly familiar with Jesus Christ as man with man. By what stretch of imagination can we suppose that such a person could ever have invented, or have accepted from others this mode of speaking about his former Teacher, had he not been conscious of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus as simply historical facts, of the same order as the fact of His death?

Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.—There can be no doubt that this whole verse is coloured by recollection of the circular letter which St. Paul had sent to the Churches of Asia, which we call the Epistle to the Ephesians. Perhaps the heresy which St. Paul lamented in that Epistle may still have lingered in existence, in cabalistic Jewish circles, among those same Churches when St. Peter thus wrote to them. He may, for the moment, be glancing away from his faint-hearted Hebrew brethren, who, in fear of persecution, were slinking back into Judaism, and turning rather to those Gnosticising Jews who began to abound in Asia, who made "genealogies" of æons, and gave Christ a place among them. In favour of such an opinion one might

angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.^b

A.D.
cir. 60.

^b Eph. 1.
21.

CHAPTER IV. —

⁽¹⁾ Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the

appeal to the vivid picture of licentiousness in the next chapter, and the development of the same, manifestly under Gnostic influence, in the Second Epistle and in the Apocalypse. From the expression "being made subject," or, literally, *having been subdued* (or, *subjected*), we may infer that St. Peter meant *evil* spirits, this being a crowning triumph of Christ, and not only a mark of His *exaltation*. We need not think that St. Peter, any more than St. Paul, is distinctly teaching that there are such grades of spiritual beings; he is probably only borrowing the titles from the heretics glanced at, and saying that, whatever unseen powers there are, whatever they may be called, they are now subdued to Christ.

IV.

⁽¹⁾ Forasmuch then . . . —

Literally, a participial phrase: *Christ, then, having suffered in* (or, *to*) *the flesh*—i.e., so far as the flesh is concerned. The reference is to the words "killed in (or, *to*) the flesh" in chap. iii. 18, to which the word "then" takes us back. It is difficult to decide about the right of the words "for us" to stand in the text. Tischendorf and Lachmann strike them out, and they are probably right in doing so. The authority for the reading "for you" is nearly as strong; but in fact neither is wanted here, as the point is not the atoning character of Christ's death, but the death itself.

Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. — Or rather, *with the same conception*. It does not mean merely "put yourselves into the same disposition:" that is, "resolve to die with Him." Though the word which is here rendered "mind" may possibly bear the meaning "intent" assigned to it in Heb. iv. 12 (the only other place in the New Testament where it occurs), the more natural and commonsense is that of *conception, notion, view*. Christ is therefore said to have been "armed" with a particular "conception" or "view," which He found to be sufficient shield in the day of suffering; and we are exhorted to try the same defensive armour. The "view" which Christ found so efficacious was the view He took of the "suffering" itself. What that view was is forthwith explained.

For he that hath suffered in the flesh . . . — Rather, *that he that hath suffered to the flesh is at rest from sin*. This is the "view" which we are to take. The thought is probably derived from Rom. vi. 7. The death of the body puts a stop (at any rate, for the redeemed) to any further possibility of sin. Welcome, death! A slight difficulty is caused by the implied fact that Christ, too, in dying "ceased from sin." But the Greek word for "hath ceased" literally means *hath been caused to rest*, St. Peter using expressly (for the only time in the New Testament) that part of the verb which does not

flesh,^a arm yourselves likewise with the same mind : for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin ; ^b (2) that he no

^a ch. 3. 18.

^b Rom. 6. 7.

longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. ⁽³⁾ For the time past of *our* life

mean a voluntary cessation from what one was doing before, but a pause imposed from without. And that Christ looked upon His death as a boon of rest from sin (it does not say from *sinning*) is not only a true and impressive thought, but is fully justified by Rom. vi. 10, "He died unto sin," and even by His cry, "It is finished." Whatever harshness there is in the thought is much softened by the fact that St. Peter names it as the view *we* are to take, not *directly* as the view *He* took ; so that it admits of some adjustment when applied to *Him*.

(2) **That he no longer.**—The Greek admits at least equally of the translation, *That ye no longer*. Thus, this second verse will attach itself, not to the clause "that he that hath suffered," but to the clause "arm yourselves." And unless this be understood, we become involved in the difficulty that whereas, up to this very point, St. Peter has been urging the future martyrs, by the example of Christ, to face the death of the body bravely, he would now be sliding confusedly into treating of the baptismal death to sin, and indeed actually saying that a martyr's death was a step to leading the rest of the life on earth becomingly ! But if we attach verse 2 to the clause "arm yourselves," it runs, without any confusion, thus : "As Christ suffered to the flesh without shrinking,

take for your protection and support the same thought which proved a protection and support to Him—viz., that to be rid of sin for ever was the greatest of all possible blessings, and that this is only attainable through the bodily death ; and the result of embracing this thought will be, that for the rest of your lives on earth (so soon, perhaps, to be cut violently short) you may no longer live to men's lusts, but to God's will."

(3) **For the time past of our life.**—There are two words in the English here which do not stand in the true text, and sadly impede the sense. They are "of our life," and "us." The first is added by some scribe to point the contrast with "the rest of his time." The second—which should be "you," if anything at all—is simply put to fill the gap after the word "suffice." If "our life" and "us" were right, we should have St. Peter, quite unlike his wont, identifying himself with the bad life here described, as though he himself had shared in it.

May suffice.—It is the same word as in Matt. vi. 34 ; x. 25 ; and would be, literally, *For sufficient is the past*. There is an irony in the word similar to that in chap. iii. 17, "it is better."

To have wrought.—Rather, *to have perpetrated*. The Greek word denotes the accomplishment of a *criminal* purpose, as in Rom.

may suffice us to have wrought the will of the

Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts,

ii. 9; 1 Cor. v. 3; and one passage more horrid still.

The will of the Gentiles.—Just as, in verse 2, there was a contrast between man's manifold and conflicting lusts and God's unity of will, so there is a contrast now between God's "will" and (for the Greek word is quite different) the heathen's "wish." "To have perpetrated the heathen's wish" means to have done the bad things which the heathen wanted them to be guilty of. The heathen were fain to catch them at malpractices. (See Note on chap. ii. 12, and the word "speaking evil" below.)

When we walked.—A participle in Greek, which gives no support to the use of "we," but means simply *having proceeded*. Thus it does not directly state that they *had* so proceeded, for the participle explains the foregoing verb: "The past is sufficient to have done what the heathen want you to have done—viz., to have walked."

Lasciviousness.—It should be plural, expressing the repeated acts of sin. The word in Greek means any outrageous debauchery, so that it may be said to include all the words that follow.

Excess of wine, in like manner, should be plural. It is a contemptuous word (*wine-swillings*), and differs from the word translated "banquetings" below, because the latter is more refined, and also implies company, which the first need not. The "revellings" might mean any roystering parties, but contains more of the notion of making a pretext of a *meal* than

"banquetings" which consist solely of drinking.

Abominable idolatries.—It is not *as* idolatries that they are called abominable, but because of the abominable adjuncts of the idol-festivals. This clause is the main support of those who think that the Letter was written to converts from heathenism, and not from Judaism. How, it is urged, could St. Peter have said to persons who had been brought up as Jews, "The time past is long enough for you to have proceeded in abominable idolatries"? The argument is most convincing as it stands. If they had been living in idolatry, it is incredible that they were of Hebrew race; if they were of Hebrew race, it is incredible that they should have lived in idolatry. But, as a matter of fact, St. Peter does not say that they ever *had* lived in those sins. Quite on the contrary, he says, in verse 4, that the heathen found, to their surprise, that the Christians would *not* go with them in these things; and that, finding it to be so, they "blasphemed" or slandered them in this very respect. It may, perhaps, be answered, that the Apostle is alluding to a period *long* past, and contrasting it with the present which so puzzled the Gentiles. But there is no ground for taking "the time past" to mean the time up to the date of their conversion to Christianity. It is simply "your past time" (*i.e.*, the whole up to the date of the Letter), in contrast with "the rest of your time" (verse 2, literally, *your remaining time*), *i.e.*, the whole subsequent to the date of the Letter;

excess of wine, revellings, |

| banquetings, and abomina-

so that it cannot mean, "The heathen think it strange that you do not join their profligate courses as you used in old days," in which case we should naturally have expected him to say, "They think it strange that ye *no longer* run with them." Besides, it seems plain, from verse 2, that, whatever may be meant by "perpetrating the wish of the Gentiles," it was still a *present* danger when St. Peter wrote, or there would be little point in mentioning it at all. But if he means that, up to the date of the Letter, some of the recipients of it had been living in "abominable idolatries," how could he continue that the Gentiles were astonished that they did *not* do so? for if the idolatries meant were the heathen's own idolatries, the heathen would have been aware of their joining them, and it would have been no "slander" to say so. The conclusion is, that neither before nor after their conversion had they been really proceeding thus. St. Peter is, in fact, only putting in words the slander of the Gentiles, at which he had hinted in chap. ii. 12—15; iii. 16. "For the *future*," says he, "live to the will of God, not to the lusts of men. The *past* is long enough (without invading the future) to have perpetrated—what the heathen want you to have perpetrated—viz., to have been proceeding in debaucheries and abominable idolatries—slandering you in that very point wherein they are puzzled if you do not run with them to the same excess of riot." As an historical fact, these are the very calumnies which we find to have been brought against the early

Christians—idolatries and all. The filthy idolatry ascribed to the Christians by the heathen may be found recorded in Tertullian's *Apology*, and (so it is said) on the walls of Pompeii. But what, then, does St. Peter mean when he says that the past is sufficient to have perpetrated what the heathen wanted? It certainly implies that some of them had, even since their conversion, been doing what the malicious heathen would be glad to see them do. But we have already noticed that he is speaking ironically in using the word "sufficient," and the irony continues through the rest of the clause. "Some of you have been living up to the present time, more or less to human lusts (verse 2). You have done so quite long enough now. You have quite sufficiently gratified the Gentiles, who long to prove that you are no better than themselves." The argument is like that which Nestor, in Homer, addresses to the wrangling Greek captains:—

"Sure Priam would rejoice, and Priam's sons,
Could they but learn this feud betwixt you twain."

We may observe, further, that all through the Epistle St. Peter appears to have dread of a doctrine which was fast beginning to rise among the Asiatic Christians—that such sins as fornication and idolatry, being but bodily, were venial, especially in time of persecution. (See chaps. i. 14, 15; ii. 11; v. 8.) Such pernicious doctrine was probably founded on a "wresting" of St. Paul's teaching (2 Pet. iii. 16) on eating things offered to idols; from which it was concluded that

ble idolatries: ⁽⁴⁾ wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: ^{a 2 Tim. 4. 1.}

⁽⁵⁾ who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.^a ⁽⁶⁾ For for this cause was the gospel preached

the accompanying impurities were innocent likewise. This doctrine becomes very prominent in the Second Epistle; and in the Apocalypse there is even some reason to connect it specially with the Jewish element in the Church. (Comp. together 2 Pet. ii. 15; Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15, with Rev. ii. 9.)

⁽⁴⁾ **Wherein they think it strange.**—The word “wherein” is used in exactly the same sense as in chap. ii. 12; that is to say, it does not directly point back to the list of sins just named, but the grammatical antecedent is to be supplied in the participial clause which follows, thus: “In a particular where they cannot imagine your *not* being as bad as themselves, slanderously affirming that you *are*.” The only difficulty involved in this view is one which does not show in the English, viz., that the participle is attracted into the nominative case by the influence of the finite verb, instead of being (as it strictly should) in the genitive, agreeing with “of the Gentiles.” But we have seen before that St. Peter deals very freely with participles in the nominative case. (See chap. ii. 12, where “having” is nominative, though in strictness it should be accusative, agreeing with “you, as strangers and pilgrims;” comp. also ii. 18; iii. 1, 7, 9, 15, 16.) Like instances are not wanting in classical Greek.

⁽⁵⁾ **Who shall give account.**—Perhaps said with a reference to

chap. iii. 15, where these very persons call the Christians to give “account” (the Greek word is the same). The side-purpose of the clause (as in the similar threat, chap. ii. 8) is to warn the readers against sharing their fate by sharing their sins.

To him that is ready to judge.—This carries on the history of Jesus Christ a step further still. The last thing was his sitting on the right hand of God. This is the order of the Apostles’ Creed. Bengel wisely remarks: “The Apostles, when they are not expressly treating of the date of Christ’s advent, set forth that advent to their longing and devotion as close at hand. Hence Peter includes the slanderers of his day among the *living*, as just about to be judged.”

⁽⁶⁾ **For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead.**—This version is misleading, and seems indeed to be one of those rare cases where the original has been expanded by the translators for doctrinal ends. The Greek is simply, *For for this end was the gospel preached to the dead also*, or, still more literally, *to dead men also*. No one with an un-preoccupied mind could doubt, taking this clause by itself, that the persons to whom this preaching was made were dead at the time of being preached to. If this is the case, then, pretty obviously, St. Peter is carrying us

also to them that are ^{a ch. 3, 19.} | dead,^a that they might be

back to his teaching of chap. iii. 19, and is explaining further the purpose of Christ's descent into hell.

That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.—In order to obtain a clear notion of this hard saying, it will be necessary once more to survey the course of the whole passage. "It is better," the Apostle said, "to suffer in well-doing than in evil-doing." They must take their choice, that is, which kind of suffering they would have. It was not indeed certain that in case they chose to do *well* they would suffer for it; and if they *did*, there was the history of Christ to encourage them. But in case they chose to be evil-doers, it was certain that they would suffer. "And you had better," he says, "suffer in well-doing than in evil-doing." He then gives an instance of persons who suffered in evil-doing—the fleshly Antediluvians, whom God cut short in their crimes by the Flood, and to whom Christ went to preach in their prison-house. He then exhorts his readers—some of whom had, for one reason or another, been allowing themselves to fall into antinomian ways—not to live any longer to the flesh, not to make true the slanders of the heathen, who tried to make out that the Christians were as bad livers as themselves; for such evil-doers were doomed to speedy suffering; those heathens would soon be called to account by Him who was ready to judge quick and dead alike; "for," he adds, "the object of that preaching to the dead also was that they may be judged according to

men in flesh, but may live according to God in spirit." (1) The first question is, What does the Apostle mean to substantiate by this last verse, "*for* for this cause?" Not the fact that Christ will judge the dead as well as the quick, for that would have no practical bearing upon the readers. Not the fact that Christ was now *ready* for judgment; for although He will certainly not come until the dead as well as the quick are in a position to be judged, yet we should then have expected something more like, "The reason why the dead were preached to was that the judgment might no longer be put off;" instead of which the whole point of the verse is the particular destiny in reserve for those dead, which destiny was the intention and result of Christ's preaching the gospel to them. It must, therefore, be a further reason for warning the Christians not to live lives of evil-doing like the contemporaries of Noah or their own heathen contemporaries. If it be necessary to attach the word "*for*" to any particular words, we may perhaps attach it to the words "they shall give account;" and verse 6 would hint at the kind of account they would have to give, as "giving account" implies the settlement which follows. (2) But if verse 6 clenches the warning to the Christians not to become antinomian, then we must understand the destiny of these dead to whom Christ preached to be not the brightest, after all. This brings us to consider what is meant by their being "*judged in flesh*" (*i.e.*, as in verse 1, so far as flesh is concerned). In

judged according to men
in the flesh, but live ac-

^a 1 Cor.
5. 5.

cording to God in the
spirit.^a

the previous verse, Christ is said to be quite ready to "judge" quick and dead. The context makes us feel that St. Peter is not picturing to himself that scene as one of calm forensic investigation, with "opened books" or the like. His idea of this judgment is rather of a "judgment" such as took place in the days of Noe, a great *crisis* (the Greek word for "judgment") or world-wide catastrophe, which, of course, cannot harm the just, but only the unjust. He shows the same conception of the Judgment, and illustrates it by Noe's Flood, in 2 Pet. ii. 5—9, and iii. 6, 7. Now "judgment" is a neutral word, which, in Scripture, takes its colour from the surroundings, so that it sometimes is a thing to be longed for (*e.g.*, Ps. xliii. 1, lxxii. 2; Heb. x. 30); at other times a thing to be dreaded, as here. Though we do not limit the "quick and dead" here to mean the *wicked* quick and dead, yet they are evidently uppermost in St. Peter's mind, so that there is scarcely any conscious change in the meaning of the word "judged" when we pass from verse 5 to verse 6. It there means certainly a judicial punishment, or even judicial destruction. While the word often denotes a condemnation (as in English we say "to sentence")—for example, in John xvi. 1, 2; Thess. ii. 12; Rev. xix. 2—it seems to have the further notion of a judicial *death* in 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32: "Had we been in the habit of discerning ourselves, we should not have been subject to these repeated judgments (weakness, sickness,

death—verse 30); but now these judgments are a discipline from our Lord, to save us from being condemned with the world." And that judicial *destruction* to the flesh is what St. Peter means, he proves by contrasting "but may *live* in spirit" rather than "be saved" or "justified." (3) It is next to be considered what date we are to fix for this judgment of the flesh. Was it previous to Christ's preaching the gospel to them in hell, or was it to be subsequent? Taking the former line, we should be able to paraphrase, "His object was, that though in flesh they had been judged, having been judicially destroyed by the Flood, they yet might live hereafter in spirit." But, besides other difficulties, it is far more than doubtful whether it is Greek to infuse a *past* sense into the subjunctive mood here used: *i.e.*, to render this, "it was preached in order that they *might have been* judged." Had we the words by themselves, and no preconceived theology to hinder us, we should undoubtedly translate, "To this end was the gospel preached to dead men too: *viz.*, in order that they *may be* judged indeed according to men so far as they are flesh, but may live according to God so far as they are spirit." The judgment spoken of would not be their death beneath the waves of Noe, but something still future; and this view would be confirmed by reading what St. Peter says of them, and of the angels who (in all probability) sinned with them, in the passages of the Second Epistle above referred to. How, then, will

they be hereafter condemned to a judicial destruction of the flesh, but a merciful preservation of the spirit? The answer, though it seems inevitable to the present writer, must be given with trembling, and in deference to the judgment of the Church, the collective Christian consciousness, whenever that shall be expressed upon the point. A close parallel may be found in 1 Cor. v. 5. There St. Paul judges to deliver to Satan (is he the warder of the "prison" where such spirits are confined?) a person who has foully sinned in the flesh, "for annihilation of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." That in that place it does not mean a temporal judgment upon the bodily life (such as was passed upon the Antediluvians or the profaners of the Eucharist at Corinth) is clear, from the fact that excommunication was *not* attended with temporal death. That it does not mean voluntary self-mortification of the flesh in this world seems clear (among other considerations) by comparison of our present passage, for the opportunity for self-mortification in the flesh was long past for the spirits to whom Christ preached. Now why, in these two cases, do the writers take pains to point the antithesis between "flesh" and "spirit," if, after all, the flesh is to share the mercy shown to the spirit? The antithesis becomes a false one. Why did not St. Paul say, "To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that he may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"? and St. Peter, "For this cause was the gospel preached to the dead also, that though judged indeed in flesh,

they might, after all, live according to God"? And what is the point of this dread warning, if in the end these Antediluvians attain to the same bliss, "both in body and soul," as other men? There is a whole set of passages which seems to teach that resurrection—*i.e.*, the permanent restitution of life to the body—is a gift which does not belong to all. To those who eat Christ's flesh, He promises, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). St. Paul suffers the loss of all things, "if by any means he may attain to the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. iii. 11; comp. 2 Cor. v. 3, 4). Our Lord bids the Apostles "fear him [it is doubtful whether He means God, or Satan, who acts by God's permission] who is able to destroy both soul [he does not say 'spirit'] and body in hell." So it would be the simplest explanation of our present text if we might believe that these Antediluvians were to be deprived of resurrection of the flesh which they had so foully corrupted, but in God's mercy, through accepting the gospel preached to them by Christ after their death, were to be allowed a purely spiritual existence. They would thus be sentenced "according to men," *i.e.*, from a human point of view: they would be unable to take their place again among the glorified human species in a human life; but still they would be alive "according to God," from God's point of view—a divine life, but "in the spirit" only. It was a gospel that Christ preached to them, for without it they would not have come to "live according to God" at all. Yet, on the other hand, it was a warning to the Christians. When it says "the gospel was preached to the dead

(7) But the and of all things is at hand: be ye therefore so-

Chap. iv. 7—11. Need of charity, hospitality, and bounty.

ber, and watch unto prayer. ⁽⁸⁾ And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves:

also," it implies a similar preaching to others, viz., to the heathen who were to "give account," and that the result of the preaching would be the same. Those heathen who through ignorance lived corrupt lives all around, might possibly, in the intermediate state, hope to receive a gospel which would enable a bare half of their humanity to live according to God hereafter. It could not avert the destruction of their flesh. What, then, could be the hope of a Christian, one who had heard and embraced the gospel in this life, and had then surrendered himself to the same corruptions as the Gentiles?

(7—11) DUTY OF BENEVOLENCE WITHIN THE CHURCH IN VIEW OF THE ADVENT.—The end of the world is not far off; let it find you not only sober, but (above all else) exerting an intense charity within the Church, by hospitality and generosity, in these as much as in spiritual ministrations seeking not your own glory, but God's.

(7) The end of all things is at hand.—Or, *hath come nigh*; the same word (for instance) as in Matt. iv. 17; xxvi. 46. It is but a repetition in other words of verse 5, inserted again to give weight to all the exhortations which follow. Probably, if St. Peter had thought the world would stand twenty centuries more, he would have expressed himself differently; yet see 2 Pet. iii. 4—10.

Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—These words sum up the cautions given in verses 1—6, before passing on to the next subject. The first verb includes more than sobriety, and means the keeping a check upon all the desires. The usual notion of sobriety is more exactly conveyed in the word rendered "watch," which is the same as in chap. i. 13 and chap. v. 8. "Unto prayer" is a slip for *unto prayers*; the difference is that it does not mean that we are to be always in frame to pray, but that actual prayers should be always on our lips: every incident in life should suggest them. They would be especially necessary if any moment might see the end of the world. The tense of the imperatives in the Greek carries out the notion that the persons addressed had slipped into a careless state, from which they needed an arousal.

⁽⁸⁾ And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves.—The original is far more vigorous: *But before all things keeping intense your charity towards yourselves*. St. Peter assumes that the charity is there, but insists on its not being suffered to flag in outward expression. (Comp. the same word in chap. i. 22; also in Luke xxii. 44; Acts xii. 5; xxvi. 7.)

Shall cover.—Properly, neither "shall" nor "will," the right reading being present, *covereth*. The words are usually said to

for charity shall ¹ cover the multitude of sins. ⁽⁹⁾ Use hospitality one to another	¹ Or, <i>will</i> . ^a Rom. 12. 6—8.	without grudging. ⁽¹⁰⁾ As every man hath received the gift, ^a <i>even so minister</i>
---	--	---

be a quotation from Prov. x. 12, "Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins;" but they are widely different from the LXX. in that passage, and also vary from the Hebrew; and as precisely the same variation occurs in Jas. v. 20, it seems more probable either that St. Peter had the passage of St. James consciously in his mind, or that the proverb was current and familiar to both writers in the form, "Love covereth a multitude of sins." It is, therefore, unsafe to argue from the exact shade of meaning which the words bear in Prov. x. 12. To "cover," in Hebrew, often means to "forgive," the idea being that of an offensive object which you bury or hide by putting something else over it; see, for examples, Pss. xxxii. 1; lxxxv. 2; and the place in Proverbs seems to mean, that whereas a bitter enemy will rake up every old grudge again and again, one who loves will not allow even himself to see the wrongs done to him by a friend. If this sense be accepted here, it will imply that the Christians in Asia had a good deal to put up with from each other; but even so, the argument seems a little strained: "Keep your charity at its full stretch, *because* charity forgives, however many the wrongs may be." It far better suits the context to take the proverb in the same sense as in St. James, without any reference to the Old Testament passage. In St. James it is usually taken to mean, "He shall save (the convert's) soul from death,

and shall cover (*i.e.*, procure for him the pardon of) a multitude of sins;" but as the true reading there is "*his* soul," it is more natural to suppose that St. James is holding up, as the reward of converting the sinner, that the person who does so shall save his *own* soul, and procure for *himself* the pardon of a multitude of sins. So here it seems obvious that St. Peter is urging charity as something which will be found advantageous when the "end of all things" comes; and the advantage he mentions is, "because charity covereth a multitude of sins:" *i.e.*, the exercise of this grace makes up for a great many other shortcomings in the man. A very good case might be made out for a doctrine of Justification by Love.

⁽⁹⁾ **Use hospitality.**—It is a great pity that again (as in chap. iii. 8, and elsewhere) the participial clauses are broken up in our version into separate injunctions. Here it is properly, *being hospitable*. This is the first form of charity—receiving Christians who came from other towns (comp. 3 John, verses 5, 6). See how such hospitality covers (to the surprise of the bestowers) a multitude of sins in Matt. xxv. 35—38.

Without grudging.—That is, *without murmuring*. How frequently Christian hospitality is marred by grumbling at the expense and the trouble which it costs!

⁽¹⁰⁾ **As every man hath received the gift.**—There is no

the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

(11) If any man speak, let ^{a 1 Cor. 4.} 7.

him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth :^a

definite article in the Greek, which might be rendered, *According as every man was gifted*. They are reminded, as in 1 Cor. iv. 7, that the gift was *received*, and for the same purpose. At what period these gifts were received it is hard to say, as in some instances the gift was of a spiritual nature, in others of a temporal nature. Each, however, has a gift of *some* kind for the benefit of the community.

Even so minister.—In the original *ministering*. It is still an exhibition of the “intense charity” of verse 8. The verb is the same as in chap. i. 12, where see Note.

As good stewards.—No one receives these gifts, spiritual or temporal, as his own; he is but a “steward,” and when he offers them to the Church it is not as a benefactor, but as a servant, “ministering.”

Of the manifold grace of God.—“Grace” is here used not in its theological sense, but, as in chap. iii. 7, in the sense of bountiful giving; and the beautiful word rendered “manifold” brings out the subtle and picturesque *variety* with which God arranges and distributes His bounty. But the emphatic word of the sentence is “of God.”

(11) **If any man speak.**—St. Peter proceeds to speak of two particular forms taken by this “manifold grace of God:” (1) the power to speak; (2) the power to minister. The speaking is, of course, public preaching in the

Church; and the man who does so is to do it “as oracles of God.” The article is not added in the Greek, so that it must not be pressed to mean “speaking on the model, or in accordance with the doctrines of the Old Testament.” Rather, the emphatic word is “of God;” and the Apostle means that the preacher is not to trust to his own natural powers and wit, or to seek applause for himself, but to act as one possessed of powers not his own; to speak only that which God inspires him to speak. This clause must not be taken as being in this place complete in itself. It is apparently only introduced to give point to what follows, the intention of the whole paragraph being to enforce liberality. It is easy to recognise in *spiritual* things the principle of God being all in all; and St. Peter bids them apply the same principle to material gifts. “Recollect that *whatever* you possess, you possess from God in trust for the Church. Just as the man who preaches is to preach as a mere mouthpiece of God, so the man who gives must consider himself as being but God’s dispenser, that in this, too, God may have all the glory.” For the same kind of rhetorical effect, see chap. ii. 17, last Note.

If any man minister.—This does not mean “ministering” in the congregation, or spiritual ministrations of any sort, but giving the good things of this life for the benefit of the poor. The word

that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

(12) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to

Chap. iv. 12—19.
Encouragement
against the evil
days to come.

rendered "ability" not unfrequently expresses (like our word "resources") a sufficiency of wealth; and the word which appears as "giveth" is the same which is used of supplying material blessings in 2 Cor. ix. 10. In a compound form, the same verb occurs in Gal. iii. 5, Col. ii. 19, 2 Pet. i. 5—11; and the substantive in Eph. iv. 16, Phil. i. 19. The original classical meaning of the word is to pay the expenses of putting a play on the stage, which at Athens was a public burden borne by the wealthier citizens in turn, like the shrievalty of an English county. Thus the wealthy Christian who supports the Church and relieves all the poor is not really the Church's patron; he is a responsible manager, but the paymaster is God.

That God in all things may be glorified.—How clearly St. Peter works it out: "the manifold grace of God," "as oracles of God," "out of the resources of which God is paymaster," "that God in all things may be glorified." The "all things" means emphatically that in these money matters as much as in the spiritual works God's honour is concerned. For a most touching expansion of this text, see the Epistle of St. Theonas, Patriarch of Alexandria, to the High Chamberlain of the Emperor Diocletian, an English translation of which may be seen in *The Persecution of Diocletian*, by the same hand as these Notes.

Through Jesus Christ.—They see and feel that, had it not been for Jesus Christ, these rich men would not have been so liberal; and when they thus thank Him for it, they are in effect thanking God.

To whom.—That is, to God, rather than to Jesus Christ. And it should be, "to whom *is*," or *belongs*, rather than "to whom *be*," and "*the* glory and *the* dominion," not "glory and dominion."

(12—19) EXHORTATION TO COURAGE AND STEADFASTNESS IN PERSECUTION.—All ought to be prepared for persecution. It is a blessed and glorious thing to have to bear it. A criminal's death and a Christian martyrdom are the exact opposites of each other. Vengeance is speedily coming.

(12) Beloved.—See Note on chap. ii. 11.

Think it not strange.—The same word as in verse 4. It means, literally, to feel like people in a strange country, lost and bewildered. It is further explained by the clause "as though some strange thing were (by bad luck) happening unto you." These Hebrew Christians felt at first it was not what was to be expected, that those who attached themselves to the Messiah should have a life of sorrow and persecution in the world.

The fiery trial which is to try you.—This rendering is not

try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ⁽¹³⁾ but rejoice," inasmuch as ye are part-takers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be

^a Jas. 1.
²
^b Matt. 5.
11.

glad also with exceeding joy. ⁽¹⁴⁾ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; ^b for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of,

only slovenly, but conveys a false impression, for the fiery trial was not future, but actually present. Literally, it runs, *Be not bewildered at the conflagration among you taking place for a trial to you.* Already, then, the Asiatic Christians are enduring a fierce persecution. The word which describes it is only found besides in Rev. xviii. 9, 18, "burning." (Comp. chap. i. 7.)

⁽¹³⁾ But rejoice.—The opposite of being bewildered at it, for "rejoicing" in it implies a *recognition* of its character and purpose. The word rendered "inasmuch as" (which occurs also in 2 Cor. viii. 12) seems to mean, "in proportion as:" "the more nearly you are made to share Christ's sufferings the more you should rejoice." In the *Acts of St. Probus* (a Cappadocian), when, after many other tortures, the judge ordered them to heat some nails and run them through his hands, the martyr exclaims, "Glory to Thee, Lord Jesu Christ, who hast even digned to let my hands be pierced for Thy name's sake!"

Christ's sufferings.—Rather, *the sufferings of the Christ.* (Comp. Note on chap. i. 11.)

That—i.e., "in order that." This is to be attached to "think it not strange, but rejoice"—"in order that at the revelation of His glory also (as now, in the sharing of His sufferings) ye may rejoice

(the word is the same), exulting." Such a recognition of the meaning of suffering, such a rejoicing in suffering now, is a sure means to rejoicing in glory also hereafter.

⁽¹⁴⁾ If ye be reproached.—The form of speech denotes that they *were* so reproached.

For the name of Christ.—Literally, "*in the name of Christ,*" i.e., on the score of being Christians only. (Comp. verse 16.) Again, see how St. Peter presses the Messianic title: surely they will not abandon the hopes of Israel!

The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.—He is called the "Spirit of glory" here in the same way as He is called the "Spirit of truth" (John xiv. 17), the "Spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 4), the "Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29), &c. It expresses that glory—i.e., the triumphant manifestation of perfections—is His *gift* and His distinguishing sign and the atmosphere in which He lives. "Glory" stands in contrast with "reproach." And lest it should be doubted who was meant by the splendid phrase, the Apostle adds, "and of God." All "glory" is His, and therefore the Spirit which is the "Spirit of glory" can be no other than the "Spirit of God;" but as God Himself is greater than His own glory, the words form a climax, and it means more to call Him the

but on your part he is glorified. ⁽¹⁵⁾ But let none

of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-

"Spirit of God" than to call Him the "Spirit of Glory." And this Spirit "resteth" upon the persecuted Christians. It means far more than "remaineth" or "abideth." It expresses the complete repose and satisfaction with which the Spirit of glory abides on men who have the hearts of martyrs. "This shall be My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." It is the word which is used of the quiet retreat which our Lord took after John's death (Mark vi. 31); of the calm relief which He offers to the weary souls who come to Him (Matt. xi. 28, 29); of the repose of the blessed dead after the work of life is over (Rev. vi. 11; xiv. 13). In the Old Testament it is used of the Spirit in Num. xi. 25, and 2 Kings ii. 15; but, above all, in Isa. xi. 2, which was probably in St. Peter's mind. And the argument is, that reproach for the name of the Christ is a proof of glory in reserve, or rather, already belonging to the man. Perhaps St. Peter intentionally hints (in speaking of the "Spirit") that all who make themselves partakers of Christ's reproach are made partakers of His chrism.

On their part.—These words, to the end of the verse, are an undoubted interpolation, though of very early date, appearing even in St. Cyprian's works. The clause would bring out the different view taken by believers and unbelievers of the martyr-spirit. Pliny says in his letter that, whatever Christianity itself may be, there can be no doubt such *obstinacy*

ought to be punished. Marcus Aurelius speaks with contempt of the spirit in which Christians suffered themselves to be put to death as mere self-will, unlike the philosophical grace of the Stoics. Gibbon speaks of the "pious obstinacy" of St. Felix of Tibiura.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **But let none of you.**—

The Greek takes exactly the opposite turn: "*for* let none of you suffer." The connection is a little difficult, but it seems to be this: "I say advisedly that you are happy, and that the Spirit of glory reposes on you who die for the faith; for I am sure that you will not try to deceive yourselves and others by pretending to die as martyrs, when in reality you are dying as criminals." In order to understand this caution, we must recollect how largely the first converts were drawn from actually criminal classes, and how easily they were admitted. In the Persecution of Diocletian, Mensurius of Carthage found it necessary to expose those who drew persecution upon themselves to cloke their crimes under pretence of Christian faith. "Some," he says, "are criminals, some debtors, who take the opportunity of persecution to be rid of so burdensome a life, thinking to atone for and wash off their misdeeds thereby." It is conceivable that St. Peter may have had some such danger in view.

As a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer.—The insertion of "as" in the two latter cases obliterates the distinction between the class composed of those three words and that which follows.

doer, or as a busybody^a in other men's matters. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Yet if any man suffer as a

^a 2Thess. 3. 11.

Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this be-

It should be, as a murderer, or thief, or evil-doer. When Pliny came to govern these men, a little later, he found that on a fixed day they met together before daylight, "and bound themselves by a sacramental oath, not to any crime, but that they would not do or see done any thefts, any robberies, any adulteries; that they would break no promises, and would repudiate no liabilities when called upon." These words will partly explain the general term "evildoer." (See also chaps. ii. 12, 14; iii. 16.)

Or as a busybody in other men's matters. — M. Renan writes (*Antéchrist*, p. 42): "Others, through excess of zeal, declaimed aloud against the pagans, and cast their vices in their teeth. Their more sensible brethren humorously called them 'bishops,' or 'overseers of those who are without.'" Such is, indeed, the meaning of the droll word which St. Peter here gives: except that, instead of "bishops of those without," it means "bishops of other men's matters." It denotes those prying and self-important people who fancy they can set everything to rights, and that everybody they come across is under their personal jurisdiction. Such persons would tend to make Christianity unpopular among the believers, and, in case of persecution, would be the first to "suffer" (*i.e.*, to be picked out for martyrdom; see Note on chap. iii. 14); and while flattering themselves for the boldness with which they had spoken out, they would incur St.

Peter's censure, and their martyrdom would be reckoned no martyrdom by the Church. "Cruel mishaps," continues M. Renan, "befell them; and the wise directors of the community, so far from extolling them, told them pretty plainly that it did but serve them right."

⁽¹⁶⁾ Yet if any man suffer as a Christian. — St. Peter purposely uses the name which was a name of derision among the heathens. It is not, as yet, one by which the believers would usually describe themselves. It only occurs twice besides in the New Testament — in Acts xi. 26, where we are told of the invention of the nickname (see Note there), and in Acts xxvi. 28, where Agrippa catches it up with the insolent scorn with which a brutal justice would have used the word "Methodist" a century ago. So contemptible was the name that, as M. Renan says (p. 37), "Well-bred people avoided pronouncing the name, or, when forced to do so, made a kind of apology." Tacitus, for instance, says: "Those who were vulgarly known by the name of Christians." In fact, it is quite an open question whether we ought not here (as well as in the two places of Acts above cited) to read the nickname in its barbarous form: *Chrestian*. The Sinaitic manuscript has that form, and the Vatican has the form *Chreistian*; and it is much harder to suppose that a scribe who commonly called himself a *Christian* would intentionally alter it into this strange form than to suppose

half. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: ^{a Ezek. 9. 6.}

and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the

that one who did not understand the irony of saying a *Chrestian* should have written the word with which he was so familiar.

Let him not be ashamed.—Although the name sounds worse to the world than “murderer,” or “thief,” or “malefactor.”

On this behalf.—This is a possible rendering, but it is more pointed to translate literally, *but let him glorify God in this name*—i.e., make even this name of ridicule the ground of an act of glory to God.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **For the time is come.**—The “for” (literally, *because*) seems to substantiate the whole of the former part of the section, from verse 12 onwards, but with special reference to the injunction to glorify God on the ground of bearing the name of Christians, upon which it follows in much the same way as “*for the spirit of glory*” followed upon “if ye be reproached . . . happy are ye.” The judgment is just about to begin, and all those who bear the name of Christians may well be thankful that they do.

That judgment.—It should be, *that the judgment*—i.e., the great judgment which we all expect. The word “begin,” however, shows that in St. Peter’s mind it would be a long process; and he probably does not distinguish in his mind between the “burning which is befalling for a trial” and the final judgment, except that that “burning” is but the beginning. (Comp. verse 5.)

Begin at the house of God.

—The phrase contains an obvious reference to Ezek. ix. 6 (comp. also Jer. xxv. 29). Who are meant by the “house of God” is clear, not only from such passages as chap. ii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 4, but also from the immediate addition, “and if first at us.” We who are *Chrestiani*, who bear the mark of the Christ’s shame upon our foreheads, and are not ashamed of it, are quite safe in this judgment: “come not near any man upon whom is the mark.” The sense is a little closely packed. It seems as if St. Peter meant at first only to say, “Thank God that you are ‘Christians,’ for the judgment is just about to begin,” as something which only concerns the unbelievers; then as an afterthought he adds, “and begin, too, at the house of God,” by way of making the believers also feel the need of care.

And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be . . . ?—It is more expressive to omit, with St. Peter, the verb “begin”: *and if first at us*. The argument is: “If we, who are the very household of God, must undergo this searching investigation first, what will happen, as the judgment nears its climax, to those who,” &c. When he says “*the end* of those that obey not,” he does not mean exactly “the final doom of those that obey not,” as contrasted with “the end” of those that obey, or as contrasted with their own earlier opportunities: rather, “the end” is the end of the great process of judgment, as contrasted with the

gospel of God? ⁽¹⁸⁾ And if
the righteous scarcely be

saved, where shall the un-
godly and the sinner ap-

“beginning first at us.” The judging of the house of God has now gone on for eighteen hundred years, but it has not yet touched those who are without.

That obey not the gospel of God?—Rather, *that disobey the gospel of God?* The word is the same which we have noticed several times (see Note on chap. iii. 1) as being peculiarly applied to the Jews. Now the object of this mysterious threat (which is made more terrible by being thrown into the form of a question) is not only to solace the persecuted by the thought of God being their avenger, but to warn them against slipping into the position of those thus threatened. The recipients of the Letter, we must recollect, were Jewish Christians, who were in a two-fold danger—either of relapsing sullenly into Judaism, or of plunging into heathen excesses, like the Nicolaitan school, under the notion that such things could not hurt the spiritually-minded. To meet these two forms of danger, the Apostle hints darkly at the punishment of the two classes in this phrase and in the verse following, precisely as St. Paul, in 2 Thess. i. 8 (see Note there), divides the wicked to be punished into Jew and Gentile, or, in Rom. ii. 9, still more particularly. And that he is thinking specially of unbelieving Jews in this place appears from the context in Ezek. ix. 6 (especially verse 9), where the separation to be effected is not between Jew and Gentile, but between Jew and Jew—those “that sigh and that cry for all the abominations” committed by

Israel, and those that commit the abominations. As Bengel remarks, “The persecution of Nero was but a few years before the catastrophe of the Jews.”

⁽¹⁸⁾ And if the righteous scarcely be saved.—This is a literal quotation, word for word, of Prov. xi. 31, according to the LXX. The quotation proves to us St. Peter’s perfect familiarity with both the Hebrew original and the Greek version. We have seen how he rejects the LXX. version when it does not suit his meaning (*e.g.*, chap. ii. 8): here it suits him (though it differs from the Hebrew) and he accepts it. The “righteous” man here means, apparently, as Leighton says, “he that endeavours to walk uprightly in the ways of God,” rather than the man who is then declared finally justified. The fact that they are “scarcely” saved “imports not,” according to Leighton, “any uncertainty or hazard in the thing itself to the end, in respect of the purpose and performance of God, but only the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way.” This is only partly true. The Apostle is rather thinking of the final judgment than of the life of trial; and he means that there was but little margin left: a very few more falls, a few more refusals to follow the calls of grace, and they would have been lost. Doubtless, when the best of us looks back, in the light of the last day, upon all that he has been through, he will be amazed that he ever could be saved at all. Yet Bengel well calls us to see the otherside of the picture in 2 Pet. i. 11.

pear? ^a (19) Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit

^a Prov. 11. 31.
^b Ps. 31. 5;
Luke 23. 46.

the keeping of their souls ^b to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

The ungodly and the sinner. — This is the Gentile character. "Ungodly" denotes open irreligion—contempt of God and all that belongs to His worship. "Sinner" goes more to the moral side of the nature, pointing most of all to sins of the flesh. (Comp., for instance, Luke vii. 37.) "Sinners" was almost a synonym for "Gentiles." (See, *e.g.*, Luke vi. 32; xxiv. 7; Gal. ii. 15.) The question "Where shall he appear?" imagines some scene such as that of Matt. xxv. 32: "Where shall we see him? where will he have to stand?"

(19) **Wherefore.**—Because the beginning of the judgment—the judgment of the Christians—is so light in comparison with the fearful end when it lights on the disobedient and wicked.

Let them that suffer according to the will of God.—Our version omits an important little word: *Let them that suffer also* (or, *Let even them that suffer*) *according to the will of God.* The stress is on "suffer"—*i.e.*, be put to death. And the clause, "according to the will of God," seems not intended to mean "in a godly and unblameable manner," as opposed to the "suffering as a murderer" (verse 15); rather, it brings out that such a death is no accident, no sudden calamity, but in strict accordance with God's pre-arranged design. (Comp. chap. iii. 17: "if the will of God will it.") Thus it harmonises with the following: "faithful Creator," "commit their souls."

Commit the keeping of their souls.—The beautiful verb rendered "commit the keeping of" is a technical term for *depositing* a deed, or sum of money, or other valuable, with any one in trust. In the literal sense it occurs in Luke xii. 48; 2 Tim. i. 12: in a metaphorical sense, of *doctrines* committed in trust to the safe keeping of the Episcopate, in 1 Tim. i. 18; vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14; ii. 2: of leaving *persons* whom you love in trust, in Acts xiv. 23; xx. 32. But the words which St. Peter probably has ringing in his ears when he thus writes are the words of our Lord on the cross (where the same verb is used): "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). "Their souls" might, perhaps, with still more propriety, be here translated *their lives*. The connection will then be: "Consider the mildness of these trials compared with the terrors overhanging the sinful. Even if the worst should come to the worst, and you must die a martyr's death, it is but the execution of God's plan for you. View your life as a deposit: lay it confidently in His hands, to be returned to you again when the time comes: and you will find Him faithful to what a Creator ought to be."

A faithful Creator.—The word "faithful" is used in reference to the "deposit" placed in His hands; and the title "Creator" seems to be chosen here rather than "Father" or the like, because creation of the soul includes not

CHAPTER V.—⁽¹⁾ The
 Chap. v. 1—14. elders which
 General exhorta- are among
 tions and conclu- you I exhort,
 sion.

A.D.
 cir. 60.

who am also an elder,
 and a witness of the
 sufferings of Christ, and
 also a partaker of the

only the giving of its existence but the shaping of its destiny. "The will of God," in accordance with which they "suffer," is part of the act of creation. The noble expression, however, contains the idea that the act of creation imposes duties and responsibilities upon the Creator. It is conceivable that some powerful being (not our God) might create, and be careless of the happiness or of the moral welfare or of the mutual relations of his creatures. Such a creator would be "unfaithful:" we should have a right to expect differently of him. But God is a "faithful Creator." "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

In well doing.—In the Greek these words come emphatically last. (Comp. chap. iii. 17.)

V.

(1—11) FURTHER EXHORTATIONS SUGGESTED BY THE CRISIS.—The officers of the community are not to flinch from the duties imposed upon them, nor yet to perform them in any spirit of self-assertion. The laity, on the other hand, are to observe discipline. Indeed, mutual submission is the only safeguard in the face of a common danger. An unbroken front must be presented, and the sense of brotherhood fostered.

⁽¹⁾ The elders which are among you . . .—The best text preserves the word "therefore"

after "elders." In view, that is, of these hopes and threats, of the present persecution, and of the coming judgment, St. Peter gives his solemn charge to those who shared with him the responsibility of office in the Church. The word rendered "exhort" is that common New Testament word (*parakalô*), which we miss in English, including encouragement and entreaty, and even consolation, as well as exhortation. (See, e.g., Acts iv. 36.) The whole of this Epistle is an example of such *paraclesis*.

Who am also an elder.—St. Peter is giving no irresponsible advice. He knows by experience the dangers which beset the office. The head Christian of the world, and writing from the thick of the persecution already begun in Rome, the Asiatic elders cannot set his advice down as that of some easy layman who is untouched by the difficulty. It can hardly be said, therefore, that this is an example of St. Peter's *humility*, as though he recognised in himself no higher office than that of these presbyters. The effect is, on the contrary, to make the recipients of the letter feel that he is using a strong argument *à fortiori*.

And a witness of the sufferings of Christ.—The Greek word calls attention, not so much to the fact of his having been a *spectator*, an *eye-witness*, but rather to the fact of his bearing *testimony* to the sufferings. Here again, too, it is in Greek "the sufferings of the

glory that shall be revealed: ⁽²⁾ feed the flock of God which is among

¹ Or, as much as in you is.

you,¹ taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for

Christ." (See Note on chap. i. 11.) Not only did St. Peter know, by bearing office himself, what the dangers of office were, but he was able to testify how the Messiah Himself, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, had suffered, from which it was natural to conclude that all Christians also were destined to suffer.

And also a partaker of the glory . . .—This splendid assurance follows naturally from being a witness of the sufferings of the Christ. "I am in as much danger as any of you," the Apostle says, "but I can testify that the Christ Himself suffered thus, and therefore I know that we who suffer with Him are even now partakers of the glory, though a veil at present hides it." St. Peter insists in the same way on our *present* possession of what will not be *shown* us for a time in chap. i. 5.

(2) Feed the flock of God which is among you.—By the word "feed" here is meant, not merely the giving of pasture, but the whole government. It is the verb used in John xxi. 16, not that in the 15th and 17th verses. There can be hardly any doubt that St. Peter was thinking of that scene when he issued these directions. Our Lord had committed into his hands all His sheep and lambs, without restriction of age or country, to be fed and shepherded: and now the time was approaching when he would have to "put off this tabernacle" (2 Pet. i. 14), and he here takes order that "after his

decease" the charge committed to him may be fulfilled. He still shepherds the flock by proxy. Two other points must be mentioned, which bring this passage into connection with the charge given by St. Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 28), which was very probably known to St. Peter. (1) St. Peter calls it "*the flock of God.*" Textual critics are much divided on the reading in Acts xx. 28, but, on the whole, the Received reading seems the best supported: "the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." At the same time, St. Peter is in remembrance how Christ had said, "Feed *My* sheep." It may be fairly thought, therefore, when we see St. Peter's own theology in chaps. i. 25, ii. 3, iii. 15, that when he writes, "Feed the flock of God," his thoughts turn to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity rather than to the First.

(2) Hooker well points out, on Acts xx. 28, the *unity* of the flock. Though there were many elders in Ephesus, there was but one flock they fed between them. So now, all over Asia Minor, it was but one flock. St. Peter, to whom the flock throughout the whole world was committed, saw it as a whole, but the elders to whom he writes had only to look to that part of the one flock which was "among them." The marginal rendering is against the order of the Greek words, and does not suit the context so well when the context is rightly understood.

Taking the oversight thereof.—It is exceedingly doubtful

filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; ⁽³⁾ neither as being	¹ Or, over- ruling.	lords ¹ over <i>God's</i> heritage, but being ensamples to the
---	--------------------------------------	---

whether these words form part of the original text or not. If they do, the translation unduly limits the meaning, which would be better expressed by "maintaining (or, *exercising*) the oversight," or "performing the duties of bishops," for he is addressing men who were already ordained. By this time the word "bishop" had not become a fixed title of one special office, though the office itself was in existence.

Not by constraint, but willingly.—Why should this exhortation be given so prominently? It is hardly to be thought that St. Peter had in view the humility which led men to adopt such strange methods of avoiding the responsibility of the priesthood as we find resorted to by Chrysostom and Ambrose. Much more probably he is thinking of the actual *danger* to life and property of being "ring-leaders of the sect" (Acts xxiv. 5), which would lead cowardly bishops to throw up their office. He is not treating of the motives which should lead a man to accept the position. He speaks to persons who already *hold* the office, and urges them not to leave the flock, like hirelings, when they see the persecution coming on. Several of the best authorities add, "but willingly, according to God." It was God, that is, who put them in that station, and they must not need the compulsion of their laity, or of the rest of the episcopate, or of the Apostles, to keep them at their post.

Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.—The opposite vice

to that on which he has just passed sentence. Some, who had no fears, might be tempted to retain the office by the good salary which the Church gave, or might threaten to resign if their salaries were not raised in proportion to their risk. The "ready mind," of which the Apostle speaks, means the love of the work itself, which should be the sole motive in seeking, or performing, the gospel ministry.

(3) Neither as being lords.—Rather, *nor yet as lording it*. The English version is somewhat too strict for the Greek and for the sense. There is a sense in which the heads of the Church are, and ought to be, lords and princes over the rest; but this is very different from "lording it," acting tyrannically, forgetting the constitutional rights of their subjects.

Over God's heritage.—Quite literally, *Over the lots*. The word first of all means (as in Matt. xxvii. 35 or Acts i. 26) the actual scrap of paper or wood that was tossed. Then it comes to mean (like the word "lot" in the language of auctions) the piece of property that falls by lot to any one's share. Then all notion of *chance* disappears, and it comes to mean the portion assigned to any one. So St. Peter says that Simon Magus has "no share nor lot in this thing" (Acts viii. 21). In Acts xxvi. 18, Col. i. 12, the same word is rendered "inheritance." In Acts xvii. 4, our version endeavours, not very successfully, through the Latin word "consorted," to keep up the underlying notion of the Greek, which literally is "were *allotted* to Paul

flock. ⁽⁴⁾ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. ⁽⁵⁾ Likewise, ye

younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God

and Silas." Here, therefore, we must understand "the lots," over which the clergy are not to lord it, to be the different congregations, districts, parishes, dioceses, which had been allotted to them. At the same time it does not at all imply that any process like drawing of lots had been resorted to in their appointment, as is seen from Acts xvii. 4, just cited. It will be seen that our version is misleading in substituting singular for plural, and in inserting the word "God's." The whole flock is God's (verse 2), purchased with His own blood; but the "allotments" are the portions assigned by Him to the different clergy. It is some consolation to see, when we groan under the lives and characters of some church officers now, that even in the Apostle's days cowardice, greed, and self-assertion were not unknown.

Ensamples to the flock.—The best way of becoming a real prince and lord over men is to show them by example what they ought to do, like Chaucer's Parson, who—

" Cristes lore and hys Apostlis twelve
He taught, but fyrst hee practys'd it
himselfe."

Leighton well quotes from Nazianzen: "Either teach not, or teach by living."

⁽⁴⁾ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear.—Or, *And at the chief Shepherd's appearing.* The "and" treats it as a

simple natural consequence of acting as just indicated. The beautiful word for "chief Shepherd" seems to have been invented by St. Peter, and it has been apparently imitated in Heb. xiii. 20. How could an office be more honoured than by speaking of Christ as the chief bearer of that office?

A crown of glory that fadeth not away.—It might perhaps be more closely, though less beautifully, represented by *the glorious crown of amaranth*, or *the amaranthine crown of glory*. Amaranth is the name of a flower which, like our immortelles, does not lose its colour or form. St. Peter immediately adds "of glory," lest we should think too literally of the wreath of immortelles.

⁽⁵⁾ Likewise, ye younger.—Self-submission has been, at least tacitly, inculcated upon the pastors in verse 3; so the writer can say "likewise" in turning to the rest. In comparison with the presbyters or elders, the lay people are styled "younger," or "juniors;" although in point of natural age, or of baptismal seniority, they might be the older. So our Lord addresses His disciples (according to the rabbinical fashion) as "children," though there is good reason to suppose that several were older than Himself; and St. Paul, in the same way, called all the Corinthian Christians his "sons." This seems to be the most natural interpretation of the word; for it was un-

resisteth the proud, and
giveth grace to the humble.

⁽⁶⁾ Humble yourselves

therefore under the mighty
hand of God, that he may
exalt you in due time:

doubtedly in respect of the supposed juniority of the whole of the lay people that their rulers received the name of "presbyters." Otherwise there is nothing against the interpretation which makes "ye younger" to be an address to those who held inferior offices in the Church, such as deacons, catechists, readers, and the like (Acts v. 6, 10). The danger of any insubordination of the laity or inferior clergy against the priesthood at such a crisis was very obvious.

Yea, all of you.—Here the true text strikes out the words "be subject and," so that the clause will run, *Yea, all of you be clothed with humility one to another.* Not only mutual complaisance between rulers on the one hand and ruled on the other, but clergy to clergy and laity to laity are to behave with the same self-suppression.

Be clothed with humility.—The Greek verb is a rare and curious one. It means properly, "tie yourselves up in humility." Humility is to be gathered tight round about us like a cloak, and *tied up* so that the wind may not blow it back, nor the rain beat inside it. But there is a still further and more delicate shade of meaning in the word. There was a peculiar kind of cape, well known by a name taken from this verb (we might call it a "tie-up"), and this kind of cape was worn by slaves, and by no others. It was a badge of servitude. Thus St. Peter bids them all gird themselves for one another in a slave's "tie-up" of humility. None are

to be masters in the Church of Christ. And the humility is to be the very first thing noticed about them, their outward mark and sign.

For God resisteth the proud.—The exhortation to mutual self-submission is reinforced by a quotation of a well-known proverb. The proverb is based on the LXX. translation of Prov. iii. 34; but as it differs somewhat from both the Hebrew and the Greek of that passage, and is found word for word in Jas. iv. 6, we may probably give the same account of it as of the other proverb quoted in chap. iv. 8, where see Note. A sad calamity for Christians under persecution, suddenly to find God Himself in array on the enemy's side! (such is the meaning of "resisteth"); and this is what they *would* find, if they went against discipline. On the other hand, if they were submissive, He would bestow "grace" upon them; here again, perhaps, not in the strict theological sense, but in that of "favour."

⁽⁶⁾ **Humble yourselves therefore.**—This, too, looks like an amplification of a proverb, when we compare it with Jas. iv. 10. The humility here recommended is not merely a submissive bearing of the strokes which it pleased God to let fall upon them, but it was to be shown, as we see in the former verse, in their bearing toward one another. And "the mighty hand of God" is not to be regarded as that which is chastising

(7) casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a

roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions

them, but as the protecting shelter which they are humbly to seek.

In due time.—St. Peter probably means, in the day of judgment, which seemed so instant.

(7) **Casting all your care upon him.**—An adaptation of Ps. lv. 22, according to the LXX. Anxiety implies not only some distrust of God's providence, but also some kind of belief that we may be able to manage better for ourselves; therefore here, as in the Sermon on the Mount, we are exhorted, especially in time of danger, simply to do what we know we ought to do, and to be unheeding about the rest.

"Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live."

The confidence cannot be misplaced, for God is not forgetful of us. The play of words in the English does not represent anything in the original, where the two words for "care" are quite different.

(8) **Be sober, be vigilant.**—Single words in the Greek, and in the tense which bespeaks *immediate* attention. The best text omits the following "because." These are the sudden cries of warning of a shepherd who spies the lion prowling round the flock in the darkness, while the guardians of the flock lie drowsy and secure.

As a roaring lion.—The epithet is not only added to lend terror to the description, but the

roaring implies hunger and determination.

Walketh about.—Comp. Job i. 7; ii. 2. St. Peter, however, is not calling attention to the fact that Satan is *always* prowling about, but he warns the sleeping shepherds that he is especially doing so *now*. This season of persecution was just his time for picking off one here and another there.

Seeking whom he may devour.—Perhaps still more expressive to say, "seeking *which* he may devour." Satan is eyeing all the Christians in turn to see which he has the best chance of, not merely stalking forth vaguely to look for prey.

(9) **Whom resist stedfast in the faith.**—The expression is somewhat more picturesque in the Greek than in the English. "Stand and face him," instead of running away from posts of duty (verse 2), or lying still and letting things take their course (verse 8). And the words for "stedfast in the faith" seem to mean not only that each individual is to stand firm, but that they are to present all together a solid front to the lion.

Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—The phraseology of the original is very strange. The *sameness* of the sufferings is brought out by an expression which literally runs "the same things in the way of sufferings;" the fraternal unity,

are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But the God of all grace, who hath called

us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect,

by the use of the same abstract word which we had in chap. ii. 17. The verb rendered "to accomplish" sometimes denotes execution or infliction. So the whole will run, *knowing that the very same things in the way of sufferings are being inflicted upon your brotherhood which is in the world.* "There is one thing," says Archbishop Leighton, "that much troubles the patience and weakens the faith of some Christians; they are ready to think there is none, yea, there was never any beloved of God in such a condition as theirs. Therefore the Apostle St. Paul breaks this conceit (1 Cor. x. 13), 'no temptation hath taken you but such as is common to man:' and here is the same truth, 'the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren.' This is the truth, and, taken altogether, is a most comfortable truth; the whole brotherhood go in this way, and our eldest brother went first." The addition, "that are in the world," points the suffering Christians indirectly to solace themselves with the thought of that portion of the brotherhood which has got beyond the infliction. It would be possible to translate, though somewhat far-fetched, in point of thought, "knowing that the same sufferings (or, *the identity of the sufferings*) is completed by your brotherhood in the world"—i.e., finds a consummation in making closer the bonds of brotherhood between you.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Who hath called us unto

his eternal glory.—The true reading is, *who called you*, not "us." The moment of the call was that when St. Paul and the others first preached there. (See chap. i. 12, 25, and Notes.) The God who *now* bestows all *grace*, by the giving of that grace calls us into glory.

"The men of grace have found
Glory begun below."

By Christ Jesus.—On the whole it seems best, with Tischendorf, to drop the name of Jesus out of the text: the title "Christ" will then stand between "the eternal glory," which we possess "in Him" (not "*by Christ Jesus*," as our version has it, but *by virtue of our union with the Christ*), and the immediate mention of suffering. In Him the two are drawn inseparably together.

Suffered a while.—The Greek says distinctly, "a little while," as in chap. i. 6. All time is short in comparison of what comes after. The original looks as if St. Peter meant not only "*after that ye have suffered*," but also "*by the fact of your having suffered*."

Make you perfect.—Strictly these are futures, "*shall (or, will) make you perfect*," &c. This verb occurs again in 1 Thess. iii. 10, and elsewhere: It implies the reduction to order and fitness for work of what is disordered or broken. The others, which are all very similar in meaning, are heaped up after St. Peter's manner. Bengel thus explains them: "Make you per-

stablish, strengthen, settle you. ⁽¹¹⁾ To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. ⁽¹²⁾ By

Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this

fect, that there remain no defect in you. Stablish, that nothing shake you. Strengthen, that you may overcome all force brought against you." The word for "to settle" means "to found," to give a solid foundation. All this is to take place at the close of the short spell of suffering which is the means to it. St. Peter seems, therefore, to contemplate the passing off of the persecution before the end of the world; for these verbs could hardly be so naturally used to express our education in the world to come.

⁽¹¹⁾ To him be glory.—"The Apostle," says Leighton, "having added prayer to his doctrine, adds here, you see, praise to his prayer." This is the true consolation in trouble, to extol the power of God. If His be the dominion, and He have called us to His glory, then what can we fear?

⁽¹²⁻¹⁴⁾ CONCLUDING GREETING.—You will trust the bearer of this Letter, and abide steadfastly in the faith which he has taught you. The exiled Israel in this wicked capital feels for you. Love and peace be among you.

⁽¹²⁾ By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose.—There is not any reason for doubting that this is the same as the Silas of the Acts and the Silvanus of 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. It is not a common name, and nothing would suggest the doubt, except the ac-

ceptance *a priori* of the Tübingen theory, that the feud between St. Peter and St. Paul was so deadly as to preclude the possibility of the first giving his patronage to a friend of the second. We have already seen repeatedly how false that theory is. That the bearer of this Letter was a personage of great consideration, may be seen from the fact that St. Peter speaks of him as well known throughout the whole Hebrew population of Asia Minor. In the original the testimony is still more marked than in our version, as it has the definite article, "*the*, or *that*, faithful brother unto you." Silas being of the circumcision himself (Acts xv. 22), St. Peter can without any risk, writing to the Jews, call him "brother." And since there was probably some disaffection towards him among the Jewish Christians, for the way in which he had sided with St. Paul, St. Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, adds it as his own personal conviction that Silas was no false brother to the Hebrew Christians, by saying, "as I reckon." The words "as I suppose" (or, rather, *as I reckon*) do not imply any uncertainty on St. Peter's part, nor even that St. Peter's knowledge of Silas was less intimate than that of the persons to whom he writes. It means, rather, the most complete confidence in Silas, which the writer is not at all ashamed to declare—"that faithful brother unto you, in my estimation, if my conviction is worth anything." This only shows

is the true grace of God |

| wherein ye stand. (13) The

that St. Peter had not altered his opinion either of Silas or of the relative positions of Jew and Gentile in the Church, since that great council in which he took so prominent a part, when Silas was selected, no doubt because of his uniting liberal views with steadfast allegiance to the Law, to bear the apostolic mandates to the Gentile metropolis of Antioch. The same qualifications which fitted him for that work, would now again serve him in good stead to bear to the Jews of Asia Minor St. Peter's countersignature to the doctrine of St. Paul. At the same time the expression, "that faithful brother unto you," indicates that St. Silas had been himself working in Asia Minor. Of his history nothing is recorded subsequent to his labours with St. Paul at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19); but putting together the fact that he is not included in the list of St. Paul's companions in Acts xx. 4, with what is implied by this present passage, we might naturally infer that he was left at Ephesus, and devoted himself to the evangelisation of the Asiatic provinces.

Briefly.—So Heb. xiii. 22. The writer hints that if this present Letter is not enough to effect its purpose, it is not because there is any lack of matter or weakness of conviction. (See also John xx. 25.)

Exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.—These words give St. Peter's own account of the object and contents of the Epistle. The "exhortation" involves all that was mentioned in the Note on verse 1. The word

for "testifying" has a little further force than appears in our version; it is "bearing witness *thereto*." The fact had been *alleged* by others; St. Peter comes in as evidence to its truth. Literally, it would run: "that this is true grace (or, *a true grace*) of God"—i.e., that the position which they now occupy, through the preaching of the gospel, is indeed one which the favour of God had brought them into: it was no fictitious grace, no robbing of them under pretence of bringing them glad tidings. When he says "this," he seems to mean "this of which I have spoken," "this which has formed the subject of my Letter." And the best text pursues: "wherein stand ye," or "whereupon take up your stand." Thus the very sentence itself would contain the two elements of the Letter—"exhorting" as well as "testifying." Nothing is to drive them or entice them from the ground that the Pauline preachers have marked out for them.

(13) **The church . . . elected together with you.**—In the original it simply stands "the co-elect one [fem. sing.] in Babylon." Some, therefore, seeing immediately after, "Marcus, my son," and knowing that St. Peter was a married man (Matt. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5), have thought that this "co-elect one" was St. Peter's wife. But (1) it is highly improbable that St. Mark was in that sense "son" to St. Peter; (2) quite as improbable that she would have been put so prominently forward in such an Epistle; (3) the word "co-elect" evidently refers back to chap. i. 2, and means "co-elect

church that is at Babylon, |

| elected together with you,

with you," not "with me." It was becoming a not infrequent mode of designating a church, to personify it under a female title (see 2 John, verses 1, 4, 5, 13); and it seems therefore much more natural to suppose that the salutation is from this church of "Babylon" to her sister churches in the provinces of Asia Minor. The modesty with which this church at "Babylon" is spoken of, as being only one of many "co-elect" ones, is noteworthy. She does not claim such a position among churches as (*e.g.*) in Cant. vi. 8, 9.

That is at Babylon.—Three places have claimed to be understood under this name: (1) A little place called Babylon in Egypt, which has nothing to plead for itself except the unlikelihood of St. Peter ever being at the Oriental Babylon, coupled with the difficulty of supposing that the name is used quite figuratively. Perhaps, also, we should mention the traditional connection of St. Mark with Egypt. No one now, however, maintains this view. (2) The literal Babylon in the East. This has for itself the simple way in which St. Peter uses the word without any circumlocution. But it has nothing else for it, to set against all the overwhelming arguments in favour of the third claimant; besides which we learn from Josephus of a great expulsion of Jews from the Oriental Babylon a few years before this date; these Jews might of course, however, have gathered there again, as they did at Rome, in spite of frequent expulsions. (3) It may be called the established interpretation that the place meant is Rome.

We never hear of St. Peter being in the East, and the thing in itself is improbable, whereas nothing but Protestant prejudice can stand against the historical evidence that St. Peter sojourned and died at Rome. Whatever theological consequences may flow from it, it is as certain that St. Peter was at Rome as that St. John was at Ephesus. Everything in the Letter also points to such a state of things as was to be found at Rome about the date when we believe the Letter to have been written. It is objected that St. Peter would not gravely speak of Rome under a fanciful name when dating a letter; but the symbolism in the name is quite in keeping with the context. St. Peter has just *personified* the church of the place from which he writes, which seems quite as unprosaic a use of language as to call Rome "Babylon." And it seems pretty clear that the name was quite intelligible to Jewish readers, for whom it was intended. The Apocalypse (xvii. 18) is not the only place where Rome is found spoken of under this title. One of the first of living Hebraists (who will not allow his name to be mentioned) told the present writer that no Hebrew of St. Peter's day would have had need to think twice what city was meant when "Babylon" was mentioned. And on the mention of the name, all the prophecies of the vengeance to be taken on the city which had desolated the Holy Land would rush with consolation into the mind of the readers, and they would feel that St. Peter, though supporting St. Paul, was still in full sympathy with them.

saluteth you ; and *so doth*
 Marcus my son. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Greet
 ye one another with a kiss

of charity. Peace *be* with
 you all that are in Christ
 Jesus. Amen.

selves. Finally, as M. Renan suggests, there were reasons of prudence for not speaking too plainly about the presence of a large Christian society in Rome. The police were still more vigilant now than when St. Paul wrote in guarded language about the Roman empire to the Thessalonians. (See *Excursus on the Man of Sin*, after 2 Thess.) It might provoke hostilities if the Epistle fell into the hands of a *delator*, with names and places too clearly given.

Marcus my son.—The particular word here used does not occur elsewhere of spiritual re-

lationship, but the other thought is very improbable. We should have heard of it in other places had St. Mark been his son in the flesh. (See Acts xii. 12.) St. Mark was, of course, well known in Asia Minor (Acts xii. 25 ; Col. iv. 10 ; 2 Tim. iv. 11).

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Kiss of Charity.**—Not only does he wish them to receive the greetings of the Roman Church, but to display their brotherly love to each other as well. On the kiss of charity, see 1 Thess. v. 26. The “peace” which he wishes to them includes, though it is not limited to, peace amongst themselves.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF
PETER.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

I. The Authorship. — The question of the authenticity of our Epistle is one of well-known difficulty. The objections to its genuineness are more serious than those against any other book in the New Testament, and yet are not so conclusive as by any means to have silenced those who defend the authenticity. Before proceeding to a consideration of the arguments on each side, two remarks seem to be necessary.

(1.) The Epistle must stand or fall as a whole. It is impossible to reject passages which appear to be open to objection and retain the rest. The thought is eminently consecutive throughout, the style is uniform, and the writer frequently glances back at what he has said before or anticipates what is coming. The net-work of connected ideas which thus pervades the whole cannot be severed otherwise than violently. Moreover, the singular want of agreement among those who advocate an expurgated edition as to what portions should be struck out and what not, is another reason for refusing to disintegrate the Epistle. Thus, Grotius thinks that the words "Peter" and "Apostle," in chap. i. 1, and chaps i. 18 and iii. 15, 16, are interpolations. Bertholt would re-

tain chaps. i. and iii., rejecting chap. ii. Lange (in *Herzog*) would reject all that lies between chaps. i. 19 and iii. 3, *i.e.*, from the words "knowing this first" in chap. i. 20, to the same words in chap. iii. 3. Ullmann surrenders all but chap. i. Bunsen retains nothing but the first eleven verses and the doxology.

(2.) It is inexpedient to encumber the discussion with an attempted *reductio ad horribile* of one of the alternatives. A court must not concern itself with the consequences of finding the prisoner guilty. Let us, therefore, at once set aside all such notions as this: that if the Epistle is not by St. Peter, "the Church, which for more than fourteen centuries has received it, has been imposed upon by what must, in that case, be regarded as a Satanic device." Satan forging the Second Epistle of St. Peter would indeed be Satan casting out Satan. Or, again, "If any book which she reads as the Word of God is not the Word of God, but the work of an impostor, then—with reverence be it said—Christ's promise to His Church has failed, and the Holy Spirit has not been given to guide her into all truth . . . The testimony of the universal Church of Christ, declaring that the Epistles which we receive as such are Epistles

II. PETER.

of St. Peter and are the Word of God, is not her testimony only—it is the testimony of Christ.” Every true Christian will sympathise with the zeal for God’s Word which is conspicuous in these passages; but it will be well to keep apart two questions which they combine and almost confuse—(a) Is this Second Epistle the work of St. Peter? (b) Is it part of the Word of God? The second question is here taken for granted. The Church answered it in the affirmative fifteen hundred years ago, and it is no part of the present work to question the decision. Only the first question will be discussed; and to attempt to settle it by considerations such as the passages just quoted suggest, is neither just, nor wise, nor in the deepest sense reverent. It is not just; for how can we give a fair hearing to adverse evidence if we approach it in a spirit which compels us to regard it as false or misleading? It is not wise, for what will be our position if, after all, the adverse evidence is too strong for even our pre-judgment? It is not reverent; for it virtually assumes that the Almighty *cannot* exalt an Epistle put forth under a pretended name to the dignity of being His Word; and that He who spoke to His chosen people by the lips of impure Balaam cannot speak to us by the writings of one who may have ill-advisedly assumed the pen of an Apostle. Hos. i. 2, 3 and iii. 1, 2 may warn us to be on our guard against pronouncing hastily beforehand as to what means and instruments it is or is not possible for God to employ for the instruction of His people.

These remarks are not made with a view to surrendering the authenticity of the Epistle as a thing of

no moment, but only that we may be able to weigh the evidence with calmness. The question of the genuineness of the Epistle is one of immense interest and no small importance; but there is no terrible alternative before us. If, after all, we have to admit that the Epistle is possibly, or probably, or certainly not the work of St. Peter, the spiritual value of the contents, both in themselves and in having received the stamp of the Church as canonical, will remain absolutely unchanged; although, possibly, our own views of God’s providence in relation to the canon of Scripture may require re-consideration and re-adjustment. This, however, is but the common experience both of the individual and of the race. Men’s views of God’s dealings with them are ever needing re-adjustment, as He hides and manifests Himself in history; for His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

The objections to the genuineness of the Epistle are of four kinds: being drawn (a) from the history of the Epistle; (b) from its contents in relation to the First Epistle; (c) from the contents considered in themselves; (d) from the same in relation to the Epistle of St. Jude.

In each case it will be most convenient to state the adverse facts first, and then what may be said on the other side.

(a) *External Evidence: The History of the Epistle.*—Among the earliest writers there is a remarkable silence with regard to this Epistle. There is no mention of it, and no *certain* quotation from it or allusion to it, in either the first or second century. Neither the Apostolic Fathers nor Justin Mar-

INTRODUCTION.

tyr nor Irenæus yield anything that can be relied upon as a reference. It is probable that Irenæus did not know of its existence; it is almost certain that neither Tertullian nor Cyprian did. About Clement of Alexandria there is some doubt, owing to inconsistent statements of Eusebius and Cassiodorus. But seeing that in the large amount of Clement's writings now extant there is only one possible, and not one probable, reference to it, and that, in quoting 1 Peter, he writes, "Peter in his *Epistle* says," the probability is that he did not know it. The Muratorian Fragment (*circ.* A.D. 170) omits it. It is wanting in the Peschito or old Syriac version (and St. Peter was personally known in Syria, especially at Antioch), and also in the old Latin version which preceded the Vulgate. Thus we are brought quite into the third century without any sure trace of the *Epistle*.

Origen certainly knew it. In those of his works which exist only in the Latin translation of Rufinus he quotes it as the work of St. Peter. But Rufinus is not a trustworthy translator; and Origen, in works of which the original Greek is still extant, either expresses a doubt about it or rejects it by implication, as Clement of Alexandria does. Eusebius certainly rejected it; Chrysostom, Theodore, and Theodoret probably did so; and we learn from Didymus, Jerome's preceptor, that doubts about it still survived late in the fourth century, though he seems to have overcome them in himself. At the Reformation these doubts revived again, and have never subsided since. At the present time, a large number of the

best critics consider the *Epistle* suspicious or spurious.

On the other hand, there are possible allusions to it in Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Melito, Theophilus, and Hippolytus: and some even among adverse critics consider those in the *Shepherd* of Hermas (*circ.* A.D. 140) to be certain. Specimens of these possible allusions will be found in the Notes on passages which they resemble:—Clement, ii. 5; iii. 4; Polycarp, iii. 4; Hermas, ii. 13, 15, 20; iii. 5; Justin Martyr, ii. 1; iii. 8; Melito, iii. 5—7; Theophilus, i. 19, 21; Hippolytus, i. 21. The first certain reference to the *Epistle* as by St. Peter is in a Latin translation of a letter by Origen's pupil, Firmilian of Cæsarea, to Cyprian (A.D. 256). Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Rufinus, and Augustine accepted it, although they knew that it had been much suspected; and they, of course, had evidence which has not come down to us. The Councils of Laodicea (*circ.* A.D. 360) and of Hippo (A.D. 393) formally included it in the Canon, decisions which have never been reversed. Its omission from the Muratorian Fragment is somewhat weakened by the fact that 1 Peter (about which there is no doubt) is omitted also; and, as a set-off to its omission from the Peschito, we have the fact that Ephrem Syrus seems to have accepted it.

Thus the adverse external evidence, serious though it is, is anything but conclusive. It can easily be explained. Communication between the churches was fitful and irregular, sometimes slow, sometimes very rapid. Accidents might favour the circulation of the First

Epistle and delay that of the Second. The very fact of its being the first Letter from the pen of the chief Apostle would promote the spread of the First Epistle; and as it was known to have been written only a few years before the death of St. Peter, this would make a second Letter within so short an interval a little improbable. The marked difference of style and language between the two Letters, which Jerome tells us had attracted notice, would increase the distrust. The amount of apocryphal literature which began to appear at a very early date, and flooded the Church in the second and third centuries, made all churches very suspicious about unknown writings; and several of these apocryphal books bore the name of St. Peter. Every year that the arrival of the Epistle at any particular church was delayed would make its acceptance by that church less probable. The fate of the Fourth Gospel, on account of its appearing after the others had obtained full possession of the field, is an illustration of similar causes and effects. When we remember that many narratives of Christ's life (Luke i. 1, Note) and some letters of St. Paul have entirely perished, we need not be surprised that a short Epistle like this, containing little that ordinary Christians did not know, should have remained for more than a century quite unknown to many churches and suspected by others. If the external evidence were all, we might admit that the general and authoritative reception of the Epistle in the fourth century, *after* such full doubt and debate, is more than sufficient for us.

(b) *Internal Evidence: The Con-*

tents of the Second Epistle in relation to the First.—Very formidable lists of points of difference between the two Epistles have been drawn up, but recent adverse critics have ceased to urge many of these supposed differences; we may, therefore, content ourselves with some of the most telling of such arguments as specimens. (a) 1 Peter uses Old Testament phraseology, and quotes Old Testament writers. 2 Peter, with two doubtful exceptions (chaps. ii. 22; iii. 8), does neither. (β) 1 Peter is mainly about suffering persecution; 2 Peter is mainly about heresy. (γ) 1 Peter speaks of the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ; 2 Peter mentions none of them. (δ) 1 Peter represents the return of Christ as near (chap. iv. 7), and calls it a "revelation" (chaps. i. 7, 13; iv. 13); 2 Peter represents it as possibly distant (chap. iii. 15), and calls it "coming" (chaps. i. 16; iii. 4, 12). (ε) 1 Peter calls our Lord simply "Christ" or "Jesus Christ;" 2 Peter always adds "Saviour" (five times; and the word does not occur once in 1 Peter), or "Lord," or both. (ς) 1 Peter insists on *faith*; 2 Peter on *knowledge*. (η) The Greek of 1 Peter is smooth, with easily-moving sentences, simply connected; that of 2 Peter is rough, with heavily-moving sentences, of which the construction is often harsh and, when prolonged, broken.

To these and similar arguments it may be replied that considerable differences between the two Epistles are admitted, but they may easily be exaggerated. Of the above, some are not strictly true; in particular, (a) and (ε); others tell rather in favour of the genuineness

INTRODUCTION.

of 2 Peter. Why should a second letter, written soon after the first, on a very different subject, repeat the topics of the first, or even use much of its phraseology? Encouragement under persecution and denunciation of corrupt doctrine and conduct require very different language. Great similarity of expression under such very different circumstances would have looked like the careful imitation of a forger. Jerome's suggestion, that St. Peter used different "interpreters" in the two Epistles to put his thoughts into Greek, is a possible solution of many differences; but it is not likely that St. Peter, though originally an illiterate fisherman, was still, at the end of a long and active life, unable to write the Greek of either Epistle; and both of them show traces of a writer not perfectly at home in the language. King's theory, that 2 Peter is a translation from an Aramaic original, is another possible solution. But neither theory is needed. Both Epistles are too short to supply satisfactory materials for an argument of this kind; and neither of them exhibits any such marked characteristics as those found in the writings of St. Luke or St. Paul or St. John. An anonymous pamphlet on any subject by Carlyle or Victor Hugo would probably be assigned to the right author at once; but most writers, even if known by many books, have no such marked style as would betray them in a few pages on a special subject; and here we are arguing as to the authorship of a tract of four pages from a tract of six pages on a different subject. In such a case, similarities, which cannot easily be the result of imitation, are stronger

evidence of identity of authorship than dissimilarities are of non-identity. Difference of mood, of subject, of surroundings, would probably account for all the dissimilarities, did we but know all the facts. The First Epistle would seem to have been written with much thought and care, as by one who felt a delicacy about intruding himself upon communities which St. Paul had almost made his own. Hence the earnest, gentle dignity of the Epistle, which makes one think how age must have tamed the spirit of the impetuous Apostle. But in the Second Letter, written probably under pressure, we see that the old vehemence is still there. There is a slight indication of it in the way in which he goes at once to the point (chap. i. 3—5); as he nears the evil which has so excited his fear and indignation, the construction becomes broken (chap. i. 17); and when he is in the full torrent of his invective, feeling seems almost to choke his utterance. Hence the rugged Greek, from which at times we can scarcely extricate the construction; hence, too, the repetitions, which some have thought a sign of inferiority. They are the natural results of emotion struggling to express itself in a language with which it is not perfectly familiar. Similar harsh constructions and tautological repetitions may be found in some of St. Peter's speeches as recorded in the Acts (chaps. i. 21, 22; iii. 13—16, 26; iv. 9; x. 36—40).

Against the admitted differences may be set some very real coincidences, both in thought and language, between the two Epistles. These also may be exaggerated and their force over-estimated; but

II. PETER.

when soberly treated they are a valuable contribution to the evidence. Obvious similarities of language are of no great moment (see Notes on chaps. i. 14, 16; ii. 7); for it is admitted by all that the writer of the Second Letter knew the First. But subtle coincidences of thought, lying almost beyond the reach of the conscious imitator, are worth considering. (See on chaps. i. 3, 5, 7; ii. 18, 19.) The traces of St. Paul's phraseology, which have been urged against the originality of 2 Peter, may, from this point of view, be counted in its favour, for such traces are very strong in the First Epistle.

The arguments, therefore, to be drawn from a comparison of the two Letters do not give much support to those who impugn the genuineness of the Second Epistle. A patient consideration of the facts may lead some to the conclusion that, considering the brevity of both Letters, and the different purpose of each, the amount of agreement, both on and below the surface, throws the balance in favour of both being the product of one mind. The assertion that had the Second Epistle not claimed to be by St. Peter no one would ever have dreamed of assigning it to him, is easily made, and not easily refuted; but study of the phenomena will lead to its being doubted.

(c) *Internal Evidence: The Contents of the Epistle considered in themselves.*—It is in this section of the argument that by far the most serious objections to the authenticity occur. The following have been urged:—(a) It is unlike the simple, practical spirit of St. Peter to enlarge upon the manner of the

creation and of the destruction of the world (chap. iii. 5—7, 10—12). (β) It is unlike an Apostle to appeal to “the commandment of your Apostles” (chap. iii. 2). (γ) The interchange of future and present tenses (chaps. ii. 1, 2, 3, 10, 12, 13; iii. 3, 5) looks like a later writer trying to write like a prophet in an earlier age, and at times forgetting his assumed position. (δ) Ideas belonging to an age later than that of the Apostles are introduced. Of this there are four marked instances—(1) The expression “the *holy* mount” (chap. i. 18) betrays an age which professes to know where the Transfiguration took place (of which the Gospels tell us nothing), and which has a taste for miracles. (2) No such argument as that urged by the scoffers (chap. iii. 4) would be possible in St. Peter's lifetime; it implies that at least the first generation of Christians has died out. (3) 2 Peter is addressed (chap. i. 1) to all Gentile Christians, and at the same time (chap. iii. 1) to the same readers as those of 1 Peter, which is addressed (chap. i. 1) to particular churches, i.e., the post-Apostolic idea that the letters of Apostles are the common property of all Christians is implied. (4) St. Paul's writings are spoken of as equivalent to Scripture (chap. iii. 16).

Let us take these objections in order. (α) That St. Peter should enlarge upon the details of the creation and of the destruction of the world is not more strange than that he should enlarge upon “the spirits in prison” (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; iv. 6). It would almost seem as if such mysterious subjects had an attraction for him (1 Pet. i. 12). At least it is more reasonable to

INTRODUCTION.

suppose this, seeing that there are some facts to support us, than to settle precariously what "the simple, practical spirit of St. Peter" would or would not be likely to enlarge upon. (β) Let us grant that an Apostle is often content with insisting on his own authority: this is no proof that he would never appeal to the authority of another Apostle. In 2 Peter the writer has more than once stated his personal claim to be heard (chap. i. 1, 18), and is then willing to sink his own authority in that of the Apostolic body, nay, is anxious to do so; for, as in the First Epistle, he still feels a delicacy about addressing congregations which, in the first instance, belonged to the Apostle of the Gentiles, and so he not only appeals to that Apostle's commandment, but points out that his commandment is at the same time that of Jesus Christ. In Eph. iii. 5 St. Paul makes a similar appeal to the authority of others; and it may warn us to be cautious in arguing as to what an Apostle would be sure to do in certain cases when we find this passage used to cast doubt on the Apostolic origin of such an Epistle as that to the Ephesians. (γ) This plausible argument will not bear close inspection. The evils which the writer foretells are already present in the germ. Moreover, the prophetic present as equivalent to a future is very common in prophecies; the future is so confidently realised that it is spoken of as present. In similar prophecies in the New Testament there is a similar mixture of future and present (2 Thess. ii. 3, 7; 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 8). (δ) We come now to the most weighty group of objec-

tions. (1) The expression "the holy mount" does not imply that the mount is known; and the theory that it does is reduced to an absurdity when it is further urged that "the holy mount," as applied to a known spot, must mean Mount Zion. Would any sane Christian, whether of the first or of the second century, represent the Transfiguration as taking place on Mount Zion? "*The mount*" simply means the one spoken of in the Gospels in connection with this event. Nor does the epithet "holy" indicate a miracle-loving age. Any Jew would naturally use it of a spot where the glory of the Lord had been revealed (Ex. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15). (2) The force of this argument is not so great as at first sight appears. In the Epistle of Clement of Rome (A.D. 95—100) the same scoffing argument is quoted as condemned by "Scripture" (chap. xxiii.). The "Scripture" is probably not 2 Peter. But we here have proof that this scoffing objection was old enough to have been *written against* before A.D. 95. The kindred error of Hymenæus and Philetus was in existence in St. Paul's lifetime. Besides which, it is not certain that "since the fathers fell asleep" refers to Christians at all. (See Notes on chap. iii. 4.) The argument may be a piece of Sadducism, which had found its way into the Christian Church; the tone of it is not unlike that in Mark xii. 23. (3) The premises here are too vague for so definite a conclusion. To state the premises fairly we must say 2 Peter is addressed *in the main* to all Gentile Christians, and also *in the main* to the same readers as 1 Peter, which is addressed *mainly* to five or six different churches. From such indefinite data no very clean-cut

II. PETER

and decided result can be obtained. Moreover, it is open to question whether the idea that the letters of Apostles are the common property of Christians was not in existence in the Apostolic age. The phenomena of the text of the last two chapters of Romans (see Notes there) tend to show that this idea was beginning to arise some years before the traditional date of St. Peter's death. The Epistle to the Ephesians would lead us in the same direction. So that it is doubtful (a) whether the idea is implied in 2 Peter; (b) whether it was not in existence in St. Peter's lifetime. (4) No objection, probably, has had more effect than this. "The other Scriptures," it is urged, may mean either Old Testament or New Testament writings; in either case, we are face to face with a writer later than the Apostolic age. If Old Testament Scriptures are meant, it is incredible that St. Peter would place Epistles of St. Paul side by side with them as Scripture. If New Testament Scriptures are meant, this indicates a date at which certain Christian writings had begun to be considered equal in authority to the Old Testament, and this date is later than the death of St. Peter. In the Notes (chap. iii. 16) it is shown that probably not Old Testament, but Christian, writings are meant; not any definite *collection* of writings, but certain well-known documents other than the Epistles of St. Paul just mentioned. We must remember that the Greek words for "other" are sometimes used loosely, and rather illogically, without the two individuals, or two classes, being exactly alike (comp. Luke x. 1; xxiii. 32; John xiv. 16); so that we cannot be sure that the writer

means to place these Epistles of St. Paul on precisely the same level with "the other Scriptures." And that "Scripture" was used in the first century as rather a comprehensive term is shown by the passage from Clement of Rome alluded to above, where he quotes (chap. xxiii.) as "Scripture" a passage not found either in the Old or the New Testament. Again, the high authority claimed by Apostles for their own words makes this passage, although unique in the New Testament, quite intelligible. (Comp. Acts xv. 28; 1 Cor. v. 3, 4; 1 Thess. ii. 13.) Perhaps the nearest parallel is 1 Pet. i. 12, where evangelists are placed on the same level with the Old Testament prophets, a very remarkable coincidence between the two Epistles. One more consideration must be urged. The date of St. Peter's death is not certain, and the traditional date may be too early. Several of the objections just considered would be still further weakened if St. Peter's death took place not in the third, but in the fourth quarter of the century.

But besides answering objections we may observe—(1) that the writer professes to be Simon Peter (chap. i. 1), one whose death Christ foretold (chap. i. 14), a witness of the Transfiguration (chap. i. 16—18), and the writer of the First Epistle (chap. iii. 1); (2) that he speaks with authority (chap. i. 12, 13, 15, 16), yet is not afraid to admit the high authority of prophecy (chap. i. 19); (3) that there is some trace of the conciliatory position between Jewish and Gentile converts which St. Peter occupied between the rigour of St. James and the liberty of St. Paul (chaps. i. 1, 2: iii. 15); (4) that

INTRODUCTION.

the expression "our beloved brother Paul," so unlike the way in which Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Clement of Alexandria speak of St. Paul (see Note on chap. iii. 15), is a strong mark of an Apostolic author—a writer of the second century would scarcely find his way back to this; (5) that some striking coincidences between thoughts and expressions in this Epistle and passages in St. Peter's speeches as reported in the Acts exist, and will be pointed out in the Notes. (See Notes on chaps. i. 1; iii. 12.)

On the other hand, no weight can be allowed to the argument that "all motive for forgery is absent." It is quite true that "this Epistle does not support any hierarchical pretensions nor bear upon any of the controversies of a later age." But a motive quite sufficient can be found, viz., to put down with the authority of an Apostle an alarming corruption, both in doctrine and conduct. This motive might have induced excellent men in the primitive Church to write in the name of St. Peter, and the moral sense of the community would not have condemned them. Such personations, purely in the interests of religion and virtue, are neither impossible nor unknown; and the very words "forgery" and "impostor," in reference to such acts and agents in primitive times, are fallacious. We must beware of transferring our own ideas of literary morality to an age in which they were absolutely non-existent.

(d) *Internal Evidence: The Contents of the Epistle in relation to the Epistle of St. Jude.*—This subject is discussed in the *Introduction to Jude*. The conclusion there ar-

rived at is that the priority of neither Epistle can be proved, but that the balance inclines decidedly towards the priority of 2 Peter. If the priority of Jude should ever be demonstrated, then we have still more reason for placing the date of St. Peter's death later than A.D. 67 or 68, unless the authenticity of 2 Peter is admitted to be more than doubtful.

The conclusion, then, to which this long discussion leads us is this—the objections to the Epistle are such that, had the duty of fixing the Canon of the New Testament fallen on us, we should scarcely have ventured, on the existing evidence, to include the Epistle; they are not such as to warrant us in reversing the decision of the fourth century, which had evidence that we have not. If modern criticism be the court of appeal to which the judgment of the fourth century is referred, as it has not sufficient reasons for reversing that judgment it can only confirm it. Additional evidence may yet be forthcoming. A Hebrew or Greek text of the *Book of Enoch* might settle the relation between 2 Peter and Jude beyond dispute; and this would clear the way not a little. Meanwhile, we accept the authenticity of the Epistle as, to say the very least, *quite the best working hypothesis*.

II. *The place and time.*—The suggestions as to the place where the Epistle was written are mere conjectures; we have no evidence of any value. As to the date, any time after the writing of the first Epistle may be right; probably not long before the Apostle's martyrdom. The fact that the destruction of Jerusalem is not men-

II. PETER.

tioned is reason for believing that it had not taken place when the letter was written. If it be said that a writer personating St. Peter would have avoided so obvious a blunder, we may reply (1) that these are just the pitfalls into which literary personators in an early age fall; (2) that it is not certain that it would have been a blunder—St. Peter may have been living A.D. 70; (3) that the destruction of Jerusalem would have served the purpose of the letter so well, as an argument (more strong than the Transfiguration) for Christ's return to judgment, as a fulfilment of prophecy on this subject, and as a signal instance of divine vengeance, that no explanation of its omission is so satisfactory as that it had not yet taken place.

III. Object and Contents.—

The object of the Epistle is twofold: (1) warning against the seductions of false doctrine and the licentiousness akin to it; (2) exhortation to increase in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The basis for both is the same—the certainty of Christ's return to judgment. With true tact, the writer begins and ends with exhortation and encouragement; the warning and denunciation lie in between, and strongly as the latter are worded, terrible as are the metaphors and illustrations employed, even here the gentleness and tenderness of one who knew from experience what tenderness could do for those who had gone the length of "denying even the Master that bought them" (2 Pet. ii. 1; Luke xxii. 61) continually come to the surface, and break the flood of vehement denunciation (chaps. ii. 5, 7—9; iii. 1, 2).

The plan of the contents is easily recognised, and the transitions from one division to another are so natural, that (as remarked at the outset) it is impossible to strike out any portion as spurious and retain the rest.

I.—Introductory.

Address and greeting (chap. i. 1, 2).

II.—Hortatory and Argumentative.

- (1) Exhortation to increase in spiritual graces, in order to gain eternal life at Christ's coming (chap. i. 3—11).
- (2) Transition to the argumentative part; the purpose of this Epistle stated (chap. i. 12—15).
- (3) Basis of the exhortation—the certainty of Christ's coming, which is proved:
 - (a) By the Transfiguration, which was an anticipation of it (chap. i. 16—18).
 - (b) By the utterances of prophets, who have predicted it (chap. i. 19—21).

III.—Warning.

- (1) *First Prediction*: False teachers shall have great success and certain ruin (chap. ii. 1—10); their impious practices described (chap. ii. 10—22).
- (2) Transition to the second prediction; the purpose of both Epistles stated (chap. iii. 1, 2).
- (3) *Second Prediction*: Scoffers shall throw doubt on Christ's return (chap. iii. 3, 4); their argument refuted (chap. iii. 5—9).
- (4) Basis of the warning—the certainty of Christ's coming (chap. iii. 10).

INTRODUCTION.

IV.—Hortatory.

- (1) Concluding exhortations (chap. iii. 11—18);
- (2) Doxology (chap. iii. 18).

IV. The False Teachers and the Scoffers.—We are probably to regard these as in the main identical; but in spite of the vigorous language in which they are described, it is difficult to say what particular heresy is indicated. As in many of the Old Testament prophecies, the picture is painted in strong, lurid colours; but the outlines are not sufficiently defined to enable us to specify any distinctive characteristics. The spirit of heresy, capable of developing into endless varieties, rather than any one of the varieties themselves, is placed before us. Cavilling, pride, irreverence, impatience of restraints, impatience of mysteries—these form the corrupt atmosphere in which heresies are generated, and these are just the qualities that are depicted here. The indefiniteness of the description has been pointed out by critics on both sides of the question of authenticity. It is a strong argument in favour of an early date for this Epistle. A writer of the second century, with the full-blown Gnosticism of Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinus, and Marcion around him, could scarcely have divested himself of his experience, and given us, not the details of what he saw and heard, but the germs that had developed into these after a growth of half a century. Historic divination, by means of which the essentials of an earlier age are discovered and separated from what is merely accidental—historic imagination, by means of which these essentials are put together in a lifelike picture—are powers of

modern growth. The divination of the second century was exercised on the future, not on the past; its imagination on the possibilities of the unseen world, not on the realities of the world of sense. The disagreement of critics as to the time in the second century at which the letter was probably written makes us all the more disposed to doubt whether the second century is right at all. Bleek suggests A.D. 100—150; Mayerhoff, *circ.* A.D. 150; Davidson, *circ.* 170; Schwegler and Semler, A.D. 190—200.

The view here taken of the false teachers and scoffers, that they are the forerunners of the Antinomian heretics of the second century, is confirmed when we turn to St. Paul's Epistles. There we find indications of these evils at a slightly earlier stage. We see him contending against corrupt practices, which were on their road to being established, inasmuch as some tried to justify them on principles which were a caricature of his own teaching. His Christian liberty is stretched to cover the detestable maxim, "Let us do evil that good may come," participation in idolatrous feasts, incestuous marriages, intemperance at love-feasts, &c. (Rom. iii. 8; 1 Cor., *passim*). A self-satisfied knowledge is intruding itself (1 Cor. viii. 1—4). The resurrection of the dead is being denied (1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 18). In 2 Peter the corrupt practices and the corrupt principles are more definitely combined. St. Peter predicts that still greater abominations than those against which St. Paul wrote will not only be justified, but taught upon principle. Going beyond those who denied the resurrection,

II. PETER.

men will mock at the coming of Christ and the day of judgment. Thus the false teachers of 2 Peter are just a step nearer to the systematised Antinomianism of the second century than the evil-doers denounced by St. Paul. St. Jude shows us in active operation the mischief of which St. Paul and St. Peter had seen the beginning and foretold the development. Tertullian, Irenæus, and Hippolytus tell us to what hideous proportions and fantastic variety the development eventually progressed.

It is well known that the framers of our Authorised version, while on the whole making an enormous advance on previous English versions, sometimes went back. In some instances the changes they made in the translations on which they worked were the reverse of improvements. Perhaps no portion of the New Testament is more full of cases of this kind than the Second Epistle of St. Peter. In a large number of such cases it will be found that the earlier versions which are superior to the Authorised version are Wiclif's and the Rhemish; and not unfrequently that the version which has led our translators astray is the Genevan. None of these three versions were among those which the translators were instructed to use; and of Wiclif's they probably made very little use; of the other two they made a great deal of use. Wiclif's version and the Rhemish were made from the Latin Vulgate, not from the Greek; so that we have what at first sight seems to be a startling fact, that versions made

from a Latin translation are often superior to the best version made from the Greek. The explanation is simple. The Vulgate is a good Latin translation of excellent Greek texts; our version is a good English translation of very defective Greek texts. "The errors in the text of our English Testament inherited from them are considerably more important than the existing errors of translation" (Westcott). The late Dr. Routh, when asked what commentary he considered to be on the whole the best, is said to have answered "The Vulgate." The facts just noticed are a striking illustration of his meaning. In the Notes, the renderings of previous versions will often be given, where our translators seem to have adopted an inferior rendering.

[In writing the Introduction and Notes for this Epistle, use has been made of the Commentaries of Alford, Bengel, Brückner's edition of De Wette, Hofmann, Huther, Reuss, Schott, and Wordsworth, together with the Introductions of Bleek and Davidson, and the articles in Smith and Herzog. A much better use might have been made of them had time permitted. But it is only just to the editor and the reader to say that the commentator on 2 Peter and Jude was asked to undertake the work at very short notice, and to complete it within a very short time. If he is found to have undertaken a task beyond his strength, he must plead in excuse the attraction which the work had for him, and the wish to render help to a far abler but over-worked contributor to this Commentary.]

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

<p>CHAPTER I.—⁽¹⁾Simon Chap. i. 1, 2. Peter, a ser- Greeting. vant and an</p>	<p>A.D. 66.</p>	<p>apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have ob- tained like precious faith</p>
--	-----------------	--

⁽¹⁾ **Simon Peter.**—The marginal reading “Symeon” is to be preferred. “Simon” has probably been substituted as being more usual. The Geneva Bible, which our translators unfortunately sometimes follow when it is *misleading*, has “Simeon.” “Symeon,” of St. Peter, occurs elsewhere only, Acts xv. 14, in a speech of the strongly Jewish St. James. As being the more Jewish form of the name, it points to a Jewish Christian as the author; and as being unusual it shows that the writer, if not the Apostle, is no slavish imitator. As coming from St. Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, it is natural enough. The differences between this opening and that of 1 Peter are instructive. There, as approaching communities which might seem to belong to St. Paul, he carefully suppresses everything personal; he calls himself merely “Peter,” the name which Christ Himself had given him along with his high commission (Matt. xvi. 18), and “Apostle,” the title which stated his commission. Here, as coming a second time to those who now know him better (both through his former Epistle and through Silvanus), he

adds personal designations. There, as if not venturing to depart greatly from his own peculiar field, he addresses himself mainly to the Jewish converts. Here, with more boldness, the natural result of increased familiarity, he addresses Gentile converts chiefly. (See Note on 1 Pet. i. 1.)

A servant and an apostle.—De Wette suspects a combination of 1 Pet. i. 1 with Jude, verse 1. The coincidence is too slight to argue upon. See Rom. i. 1 and Note on Jude, verse 1.) The amount of similarity between the opening verses of Jude and those of this Epistle is too small for any conclusions as to the dependence of one on the other. Although the word for “servant” strictly means *slave*, the English version is quite correct. (See on Rom. i. 1.)

To them that have obtained.—The Greek word implies that they have not won it or earned it for themselves, but that it has been allotted to them. Comp. Acts i. 17, where the same word (rare in the New Testament) occurs in a *speech of St. Peter*. (See Note on “godliness,” verse 3.) Another coincidence to be noticed is the way

with us through the | righteousnes of God and

in which St. Peter speaks of the Gentile Christians (Acts xi. 17) when charged with having visited "men uncircumcised," and again (Acts xv. 8—11) at the Council of Jerusalem; both remarkable parallels to this.

Like precious faith with us.—Not that all had an equal amount of faith, which would scarcely be possible; nor that their faith gave all an equal right to salvation, which the Greek could scarcely mean; but that all believed the same precious mysteries. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 7.) It is delicately implied that "we as well as you have had it allotted to us; it is no credit to us; we are not superior to you." "Us" may mean either the Apostles, or (more probably) the first Christians, as distinct from those converted later, *i.e.*, Jewish as distinct from Gentile Christians. This shows that Gentile converts are chiefly addressed in this Epistle, as Jewish in the First Epistle. Gentiles would be more likely to be doubters respecting Christ's return to judgment, than Jews well acquainted with Hebrew prophecies on the subject. Gentiles also would be more likely than Jews to fall into the excesses denounced in the second chapter, which bear a strong resemblance to the catalogue of heathen vices given by St. Paul in Rom. i. The idea that Christians are the antitype of the chosen people is prominent in St. Peter's writings. (Comp. chap. ii. 1, and 1 Pet. i. 10.) Note that no particular churches are mentioned. The Second Epistle is more "general" or "catholic" in its address than the First. Here again we have a mark of independence.

A writer personating St. Peter, and referring to the former Letter (chap. iii. 1), would probably have taken care to make the address of the second letter tally exactly with that of the first.

Through the righteousness.—Better, *in the righteousness*. So Wiclif, Tyndale, and Rheims version. "Righteousness" is variously explained. Perhaps the best interpretation is "fairness, justice." He has no respect of persons, and hence has given to all Christians, early or late, Jew or Gentile, a "like precious faith."

Of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—Better, *of our God and (our) Saviour Jesus Christ*. Here, as in Titus ii. 13 (comp. 2 Thess. i. 12), we are somewhat in doubt as to whether we have one or two Persons of the Trinity mentioned. Rigid grammar would incline us to make "God" and "Saviour" both apply to Christ. But rigid grammar alone is not always the safest guide in interpreting Scripture. The very next verse, independently of other considerations, seems to determine that both the Father and the Son are here mentioned. The mode of expression which causes doubt on the subject, perhaps indicates the writer's perfect belief in the oneness of the Father and the Son. The addition of "Saviour" to the name of Jesus Christ is very frequent in this Epistle (verse 11, chaps. ii. 20; iii. 18; comp. chap. iii. 2). It shows how completely "Jesus" had become a proper name, the exact signification of which was becoming obscured. "Saviour" does not occur in 1 Pet.,

our Saviour Jesus Christ :

(2) grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, (3) ac-

cording as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and

Chap. i. 3—11.
Exhortation to progress in spiritual graces.

but the cognate "salvation" does (chaps. i. 5, 9, 10; ii. 2). Both words point onwards to safety from perdition at the last. (Comp. St. Peter's speech, Acts v. 31.)

(2) **Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.**—Identical with the last clause of 1 Pet. i. 2, and with no other greeting in any Epistle. What follows here is peculiar to this Epistle, which begins and ends with grace and knowledge. (Comp. chap. iii. 18.)

Through the knowledge.—Better, as before, *in*. The preposition indicates the sphere or element in which the action takes place, or the aspect in which it is contemplated. Tyndale and Rhemish version have "in." "Knowledge" is not quite strong enough. In the original we have a compound word, which implies fuller, ripier, more minute knowledge. But any of these expressions would be a little too strong, as the simple word is a little too weak. The same compound recurs verse 3. It is rare in St. Paul's earlier letters, but is more common in the later ones. This fact, coupled with its appearance here, agrees well with the more contemplative aspect in which the Gospel began gradually to be presented; a change which finds its fullest expression in the transition from the first three Gospels to the fourth. The word is introduced here with telling emphasis; "in the fuller knowledge of God," anticipates the attack that is com-

ing upon the godless speculations of the "false teachers" in chap. ii.

And of Jesus our Lord.—Deliberately added. These false teachers "denied the Lord that bought them" (chap. ii. 1), and promised all kinds of high-sounding benefits to their followers (chap. ii. 18). The Apostle assures his readers that only in fuller knowledge of their Lord can grace and peace be multiplied to them. The combination "Jesus our Lord" is unusual; elsewhere only Rom. iv. 24. Another small indication of independence (see first Note). There should be a full stop at "Lord;" So Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva.

(2—11) Exhortation to progress in spiritual graces in order to win eternal life at Christ's coming. God has given us all we need for salvation; let us profit by it, and show ourselves worthy of it.

(3) **According as.**—Better, *seeing that*. This must not be made to depend on verse 2. In the canonical Epistles the address does not go beyond the blessing. Galatians is the only exception; there a relative clause is added to the blessing; but this is solemnly brought to a close with a doxology, so that the exception is one that almost proves the rule. In Hebrews, James, 1 and 3 John, there is no opening blessing; the remark holds good of all the rest. Verses

godliness, through the knowledge of him that ^{1 Or, by.} hath called us to ¹ glory and virtue: ⁽⁴⁾ whereby are

3 and 4 are a brief introduction to the direct exhortations contained 5—11. The eagerness with which the writer goes direct to his subject is characteristic of St. Paul's temper.

His divine power.—The pronoun refers to "Jesus our Lord." The adjective occurs in the New Testament in these two verses (3 and 4) only; elsewhere we have the genitive case, "of God," "of the Lord," "of the Father," and the like.

All things that pertain unto.—All that are necessary for the attainment of. He does not give life and godliness in maturity, but supplies us with the means of winning them for ourselves. "All," is emphatic; nothing that is requisite is grudged us, and nothing is our own, it is all the gift of God.

Godliness.—The Greek word occurs Acts iii. 12, in a speech of St. Peter, and four times in this Epistle; elsewhere only in those to Timothy and Titus. It belongs to the phraseology of the later books of the New Testament. "Godliness" is the realisation of God's abiding presence, the fruits of which are reverence and trust: "Thou God seest me;" "I have set God always before me, therefore I cannot fall." It is introduced here, perhaps, in opposition to the godlessness and irreverence of the false teachers. (Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 5.)

Through the knowledge.—Through learning to know God as One who has called us to salvation. (Comp. verse 2.)

To glory and virtue.—Rather,

by glory and virtue; or perhaps, *by His own glory and virtue*, according to another reading. "To" cannot be correct, whichever of the various readings is the right one. Tyndale, Cranmer, and Rheims have "by;" the error comes from Geneva, which has "unto." "Glory" points to the majesty of God, "virtue" to His activity. "Virtue" as applied to God is unusual, but occurs 1 Pet. ii. 9 (see Note there), a coincidence to be noted. The word is rendered there "praises," but "virtues" is given in the margin. The whole verse is strikingly parallel to this one, though very differently expressed.

⁽⁴⁾ **Whereby.**—By God's "glory and virtue;" not by "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," although the latter is possible, and is preferred by some.

Are given unto us.—Better, *He hath given unto us*, viz., He who called us, God. Wicklif, "He gaf;" Rheims, "He hath given."

Promises.—The Greek word occurs here and in chap. iii. 13 only. Its termination indicates the things promised rather than the act of promising. They are "exceeding great," or rather "the greatest," because they contain an earnest of the completion and perfection of the Christian life; they are very "precious," because this earnest is in itself something real, and not mere empty words. Not the promises of the Old Testament are meant, that Christ should come; but those of the New Testament, that Christ should come again. The certainty of Christ's return to reward the righteous and punish

given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the

corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁽⁵⁾ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue know-

the wicked is one of the main subjects of the Epistle.

That by these.—"These" is variously referred (1) to "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," (2) to "glory and virtue," (3) to "promises." The last is most likely, the second least likely to be right. The hope expressed in this verse, and again iii. 13, is distinctly parallel to that in 1 Pet. i. 4.

Ye might be partakers.—Better, *become partakers*. Rheims, "be made." This idea of close relationship to God and escape from corruption is found in 1 Pet. i. 23. The change from the first person plural to the second is easy enough both in Greek and English: by it what is true of all Christians is applied specially to those whom the writer is addressing. We have a similar change in 1 Pet. i. 3, 4; ii. 21, 24.

Through lust.—Rather (as in verses 1, 2, 13; chap. ii. 3) *in lust*. It is in lust that the corruption has its root. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 22.) The word "escaped" indicates that "*bondage of corruption*" (Rom. viii. 21) from which even the Christian is not wholly free, so long as he is in the body, and in which others are hopelessly held. A comparison of this last clause with chap. iii. 13 will confirm us in the view that "by these" refers to the "promises." We see there what the things promised are. Instead of merely "having escaped" evil,

"we, according to His promise, look for" better things; for, from "the corruption that is in the world in lust" we turn to "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." There should be no full-stop at the end of this verse; the sentence continues unbroken from the beginning of verse 3 to the end of verse 7.

⁽⁵⁾ **And beside this.**—Rather, *And for this very reason*. The Authorised version is quite indefensible, and is the more to be regretted because it obscures a parallel between this and 1 Peter. There also we are exhorted to regulate our conduct by God's (1 Pet. i. 15; ii. 1, 5). [In the Notes on verses 5—8 use has been made of addresses *On some Traits in the Christian Character*. Camb. 1876.]

Giving all diligence.—Literally, *bringing in all diligence to the side of God's gifts and promises*; making your contribution in answer to His. He has made all things possible for you; but they are not yet done, and you must labour diligently to realise the glorious possibilities opened out to you.

Add to your faith virtue.—Rather, *in your faith supply virtue*. The error comes from Geneva; all other English versions are right. The interesting word inadequately translated "add" occurs again in verse 11, and elsewhere only in 2 Cor. ix. 10; Gal. iii. 5; Col. ii. 19. Everywhere but here it is translated "minister." Sufficient

ledge; ⁽⁶⁾ and to knowledge |
temperance; and to tem-

| perance patience; and to
| patience godliness; ⁽⁷⁾ and

explanation of the word will be found in Notes on 2 Cor. ix. 10 and Gal. iii. 5. The notion of rendering a service that is expected of one in virtue of one's position fits in admirably here. God gives; His blessings and promises come from His free undeserved bounty; man renders, supplies, furnishes, that which, considering the benefits which he has received, is fairly required of him. Note that we are not told to supply faith; that comes from God (Eph. ii. 8), and the Apostle assumes that his readers possess it. "Virtue" is that which is recognised by all men as excellent; the excellence of man as man. Heathen moralists had drawn a noble picture of what man ought to be; the gospel gave the command to realise a yet nobler ideal, and also gave the power by which it could be realised.

And to virtue knowledge.

—As before, and in your virtue [supply] knowledge—i.e., in the virtue which each of you possesses. Virtue for each individual is the excellence corresponding to the talents committed to him. The word for "knowledge" here is not the compound used in verses 2 and 3, but the simple substantive. It means, therefore, knowledge that still admits of growth, not yet ripe or complete. It is worth noting that the word for *absolute* knowledge, *epistêmê*, does not occur in the New Testament. By "knowledge" here is probably meant spiritual discernment as to what is right and what is wrong in all things; the right object, the right way, the right time.

⁽⁶⁾ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness.—And in your knowledge [supply] self-control, and in your self-control, patience, and in your patience, godliness. In other words, your discerning between good and evil must lead to avoiding the evil and choosing the good—i.e., to the control of your own lawless propensities; and in restraining these you must endure difficulties patiently; and your patience must not be the stolid defiance of the savage, or the self-reliance and self-satisfied endurance of the Stoic, but a humble and loving trust in God. Virtue and knowledge are energetic and progressive; they are exercised in developing the powers implanted in us. Self-control and patience are restrictive and disciplinary; they are exercised in checking and regulating the conflicting claims of many co-existing powers, so as to reduce all to harmony. There is special point in "self-control" being placed as the consequence of "knowledge." The false teachers would insist that knowledge led to liberty, which with them meant emancipation from all control whatever. Self-mastery is to the world at large the opposite of liberty; to the Christian it is another name for it—that service which is perfect freedom. Patience to the world is to accept loss and suffering; to the Christian it is to win the best of prizes—"in your patience ye shall win your souls."

⁽⁷⁾ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly

to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁽⁸⁾ For

if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be

kindness charity.—*And in your godliness [supply] love of the brethren, and in your love of the brethren, charity.* In other words, your godliness must not be selfish and solitary, but social and Christian; for he who loveth God must love his brother also (1 John iv. 20, 21). And though “charity begins at home” with “them who are of the household of faith,” it must not end there, but reach out to all men, whether Christians or not. (Comp. 1 Thess. iii. 12; Gal. vi. 10.) The translation “brotherly kindness” is a little to be regretted; it obscures the exact meaning of the word, and also the fact that the very same word is used in 1 Pet. i. 22. “Love of the brethren” means love of Christians as such, as members of the same great family, as God’s adopted children. “Charity” means love of men as such, as creatures made in the likeness of God, as souls for which Christ died. The word for “charity” is emphatically Christian love; not mere natural benevolence.

Each in this noble chain of virtues prepares the way for the next, and is supplemented and perfected by it. It begins with faith, and it ends (like St. Paul’s list of virtues, Col. iii. 12–14) with charity. But we must not insist too strongly upon the order in the series, as being either logically or chronologically necessary. It is a natural order that is here given, but not the only one. These three verses are the First Epistle con-

dened. Each one of the virtues mentioned here is represented quite distinctly in 1 Peter: virtue, i. 13; knowledge, iii. 15; self-control, i. 14; ii. 11; patience, i. 6; ii. 21; godliness, i. 15, 16; iii. 4; love of the brethren, i. 22; iii. 8; charity, iv. 8. The list of virtues given in the *Epistle of Barnabas* ii. runs thus:—*Faith, fear, patience, long-suffering, temperance, wisdom, prudence, science, knowledge.* The very slight amount of similarity affords no ground for supposing that the writer was acquainted with 2 Peter.

⁽⁸⁾ For if these things be in you.—First reason for the preceding exhortation—the benefit of having these graces. The original of “be in you” is a strong expression, implying permanent and not mere momentary existence.

And abound.—Strictly, *and multiply or increase.* (Comp. Rom. v. 20, and Note there; vi. 1; 2 Thess. i. 3, where the same inadequate translation occurs in the Authorised version.)

Neither be barren nor unfruitful.—Better, *not idle nor yet unfruitful.* Cranmer, Tyndale, and Geneva all have “ydle.” The Greek word literally means “without work”—i.e., doing nothing, as “unfruitful” means producing nothing. “That ye shall be” is not in the Greek, and is not needed. The two adjectives “idle” and “unfruitful” exactly correspond to the two verbs “be in you” and “increase.” If these

barren nor unfruitful in
the knowledge of our Lord

Jesus Christ. ⁽⁹⁾ But he
that lacketh these things is

things be in you, you will be morally active; if they increase, you will be morally productive.

In the knowledge.—Rather, *unto the knowledge*; the fuller, more advanced knowledge of verses 2, 3, and chap. ii. 20. This is the goal towards which all these virtues tend, the fruit which they tend to produce—the perfect knowledge of Christ. Those who are the most like Christ in their lives have the fullest knowledge of Him in this world, a knowledge to be perfected in the next world, when, purified from sin, “we shall see Him as He is.” This clause, without the negatives, accurately describes the condition of the false teachers whom the Apostle has in view. They were both “idle and unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” They neither did nor produced anything that in any degree advanced such knowledge either in themselves or others. The list of virtues just commended (verses 5—7) constitutes a solemn indictment against them. Practical infidelity leading to vicious conduct; a hollow and pretentious philosophy leading to libertinism: an impatience of control leading to utter godlessness; a selfish indifference to the claims of those nearest to them ending in absolute heartlessness towards all men—such is the charge brought against them, by implication here, directly in chap. ii.

⁽⁹⁾ **But he that lacketh.**—Rather, *for he that lacketh*. Geneva and Rheims have “for.” The “for” introduces the second reason for the exhortation to furnish forth

all these graces—viz., the evil of not having them. The Greek implies absence of possession in any degree, not merely absence of permanent possession. (See first Note on verse 8.)

Is blind.—We might have expected “will be idle and unfruitful, &c.,” but the writer is not content with merely emphasising what has just been said, after the manner of St. John (*e.g.*, chap. i. 3; 1 John i. 5; ii. 4, 27, 28; iv. 2, 3, 6); he puts the case in a new way, with a new metaphor equally applicable to the subject of knowledge. Note that he does not say “*will* be blind,” but “*is* blind.” The very fact of his possessing none of these graces shows that he has no eye for them.

Cannot see afar off.—The Greek word means literally *closing the eyes*; and the point seems to be, not wilful shutting of the eyes (those who *won't* see), but involuntary and partial closing, as in the case of *short-sighted* people: in a spiritual sense, those who have only a very hazy apprehension of the objects of belief and of the bearing which their beliefs should have on their conduct. There is, therefore, no anti-climax, a weak expression following a strong one, but a simple explanation, a more definite term following a general one; it explains what kind of blindness is meant. The special kind of short-sightedness here indicated is that of one who just sees that he is a member of a Christian community, but perceives neither the kind of life that one who has been purged from heathen enormities is bound to

blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give

diligence to make your calling and election sure : for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall : ⁽¹¹⁾ for so an entrance shall be ministered

lead, nor the kind of life which alone can win an entrance into Christ's kingdom. The short-sightedness of not being able to see beyond this present world is probably not expressed here.

And hath forgotten.—Literally, *having received or incurred forgetfulness*—a unique expression in the New Testament. The phrase does not necessarily imply that the forgetfulness is voluntary ; it is the inevitable result of wilful neglect—the neglect to cultivate Christian virtues. The forgetfulness is not the cause of the short-sightedness, but a phase of it.

His old sins.—Those committed before he was “purged” in baptism (1 Cor. vi. 11 ; Eph. v. 26 ; 1 Pet. iii. 21).

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Wherefore the rather.**—Exhortation resumed, with still more earnestness, for the reasons just stated in verses 8 and 9. The direct address, “brethren,” is a mark of this increased earnestness, and also assures those addressed that they are not included among the mere nominal Christians described in the preceding verse.

Give diligence.—Recalling “bringing all diligence” in verse 5.

Calling and election.—By God into the kingdom of heaven. “Calling” and “election” are two aspects of the same fact, “calling” referring to God's invitation, “election” to the distinction which this invitation makes between those who are called and

those who are not. “Election” is one of St. Paul's words. One of the best MSS. and several versions insert “by means of your works,” which gives the right sense, although the words are wanting in authority. It is by following the injunctions given (verses 5—7) that our election is made secure. God calls us to salvation (verse 3), selects us from the heathen ; it is for each one of us to respond to the call, and thus ratify His choice.

If ye do these things.—Showing that the making sure of our election is not a single act, but multiform, viz., the furnishing the graces commended (verses 5—7).

Never fall.—The same word is translated “offend” (Jas. ii. 10 ; iii. 2) ; and “stumble” (Rom. xi. 11). It means to knock one's foot and stumble. The man who has acquired these graces has his path freed from many stumbling-blocks, and his vision cleared to see and avoid the rest.

⁽¹¹⁾ **An entrance shall be ministered unto you.**—“Ministered” is the passive of the same verb that is translated “add” in verse 5, and is probably chosen to answer to verse 5. “Supply these graces, and an entrance into the kingdom shall be abundantly supplied to you—“abundantly,” i.e., with a warm welcome, as to a son coming home in triumph ; not a bare grudging admission, as to a stranger.

Thus ends the first main section

unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ⁽¹²⁾ Wherefore I

Chap. i. 12—15.
Transition from
exhortation to
argument.

will not be negligent to put you al-

ways in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth. ⁽¹³⁾ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you

of the Epistle, which contains the substance of the whole. Its gentle earnestness and obvious harmony with the First Epistle have made some critics ready to admit its genuineness, who throw doubt on much of the rest. But if it stands, it carries with it all the rest. Change of style is amply accounted for by change to a new and exciting subject; and the links between the parts are too strong to be severed by any such considerations. (See opening observations in the *Introduction*.)

The first sections of the two Epistles should be carefully compared. In both we find these thoughts pervading the opening exhortation: Be earnest, be active; for (1) so much has been done for you, and (2) there is such a rich reward in store for you. (Comp. especially the conclusions of the two sections, 1 Pet. i. 13 with 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

^(12—15) Transition from the exhortation just concluded to the argument that follows, closely and naturally connected with both.

⁽¹²⁾ I will not be negligent. —According to the right reading, *I shall be sure to*; because on your doing these things depends your entrance into Christ's kingdom.

Though ye know them.—

We find the same affectionate delicacy in Rom. xv. 14, 15 (see Notes there); 1 John ii. 21; Jude, verse 5.

And be established in the present truth.—Comp. "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. v. 12), to which it is not impossible that this verse refers; the "always" here looks like a half apology for what his readers might think needless repetition. "The present truth" is an instance of a translation being misleading through its very literalness. The three Greek words are exactly represented, but the sense is misrepresented. The meaning is, not the truth that we are now discussing, the truth before us, but the truth of the gospel that is come unto you (Col. i. 5, 6), and is present with you: "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude, verse 3).

⁽¹³⁾ Yea, I think it meet. —Better, *But I think it right*. So Rheims; Tyndale and Cranmer have "notwithstanding." The meaning is, "but (so far from my writing being unnecessary) I think it right," &c.

In this tabernacle. —The comparison of the human body to a dwelling is common in all literatures, and the temporary nature of a tent makes it specially appropriate. (Comp. 2 Cor. v. 1.)

up by putting *you* in remembrance; ⁽¹⁴⁾ knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even

^a John
xxi. 18.

as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.^a ⁽¹⁵⁾ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my

By putting you in remembrance.—Better, *in putting you*. The stirring up consists in the reminding. (See verses 1, 2, 4; also chap. iii. 1, where the same phrase occurs.)

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle.**—This is rather wide of the mark. Among English versions Wiclif alone is right. The meaning is, *Knowing as I do that the putting off of my tabernacle will be done swiftly* (comp. chap. ii. 1)—i.e., will soon be over when it once begins. The point is, not that the writer believes himself to be near his end, but that his end would be such as to allow of no death-bed exhortations; what he has to say must be said in good time, for Christ had told him that his death would be a violent one (John xxi. 18). Some of those who have taken the passage in the sense of the Authorised version have supposed a special revelation to be implied in the last half of the verse. But without any revelation an old man might know that his end must soon come; and Christ had already told him that it should come when he began to be old. "The putting off of my tabernacle" involves rather a mixture of metaphors; we have a similar mixture in Col. v. 1—4. The word for "putting off" occurs nowhere but here and 1 Pet. iii. 21; but the coincidence is not one on which much stress can be laid.

strictly, *shewed me*. The substitution of perfect for aorist is here objectionable, as it obscures the reference to a definite moment in the Apostle's life. If the reference were to John xxi. 18, this would be at once fatal to the authenticity of our Epistle; for of course no part of St. John's Gospel, and least of all the last chapter, was written during the life of St. Peter. But if the reference be to the event narrated in John xxi. 18, then that narrative confirms what is said here, this being a prior and independent allusion to the same occurrence. In this case we have strong evidence of the authenticity of St. Peter.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Moreover I will endeavour.**—The verse requires rearranging. "Always" (or better, *at all times*) belongs to "may be able," not to "have in remembrance;" and perhaps "moreover" is not quite right. Better, *But I will endeavour that ye may at all times also* (as well as now) *have it in your power after my decease to remember these things*. To what does this declaration point? The simplest answer is, to his writing this letter, which they might keep and read whenever they liked. (Comp. verse 13.) Other suggestions are—to his having copies of this letter distributed; or, writing other letters; or, instructing St. Mark to write his Gospel; or, commissioning "faithful men" to teach these things. There seems to be nothing either for or against

Hath shewed me. — More

decease to have these things
always in remembrance.

(16) For we have not followed
cunningly devised fables,

these conjectures. It is a coincidence worth noting that, with the Transfiguration in his mind (verses 16—18), he uses, in close succession, two words connected in St. Luke's account of the Transfiguration (Luke ix. 31, 33)—“decease” and “tabernacle.”

(16—21) The certainty of Christ's coming again is the basis of these exhortations; and that certainty is proved (1) by the Transfiguration, which was an anticipation of His coming again in glory; (2) by the utterances of the prophets who predicted it.

(16) **For we have not followed.**—More literally, *For we did not follow*, or, *It was not by following out, &c., that.* “For” introduces the reason for “I will endeavour,” above. The word for “follow,” or “follow out,” occurs again in chap. ii. 2, 15, and nowhere else in the New Testament.

Cunningly devised fables.

—We cannot be sure that any in particular are meant, whether heathen, Jewish, or Christian; the negative makes the statement quite general. Various things, however, have been suggested as possibly indicated — heathen mythology, Jewish theosophy, Gnostic systems (as yet quite in their infancy in Simon Magus, St. Peter's adversary), and Apocryphal Gospels. Probably some elements in the doctrine of the false teachers are alluded to; something analogous to the “feigned words” of chap. ii. 3. There is reason for believing that the particular elements in

their teaching thus incidentally condemned were of *Jewish* origin. If this conjecture be correct, then St. Peter is here dealing with errors similar to those condemned by St. Paul (1 Tim. i. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Tit. i. 14—the only other passages in which the word “fables” occurs). And in this case much light is thrown on some of the marked peculiarities of this Epistle and that of St. Jude, viz., the fondness of both writers for the oldest, and sometimes the most obscure, passages of Old Testament history, as well as for some strange portions of uncanonical and apocryphal tradition. They were fighting these seducers with their own weapons; difficult passages of Scripture and tradition, which these men had worked up into a system of pernicious mysticism, St. Peter and St. Jude proved to be altogether of a different meaning, and to tell against the very doctrines that they were employed to support.

When we made known unto you.—It is difficult to determine to what this refers. It is erroneous to suppose that the phrase necessarily implies personal communication by word of mouth. In the First Epistle the Apostle wrote to congregations not personally acquainted with him; and we have no reason for assuming that he had visited them since. “When we made known” may possibly refer to the First Epistle, against which supposition the plural “we” is not conclusive. Or a written Gospel—and, if so, the one with which St. Peter is commonly connected, viz., that of St. Mark—may

when we made known unto
 you the power
 and coming
 of our Lord
 Jesus Christ,
 but were eye-
 witnesses of his majesty.

Chap. i. 16—21.
 The certainty of
 Christ's coming
 the basis of these
 exhortations.

(17) For he received from
 God the Father honour
 and glory, when there
 came such a voice to him
 from the excellent glory,
 This is my beloved Son, in
 whom I am well pleased.

be in the Apostle's mind. But the simplest explanation is that he refers to the Apostolic teaching generally.

The power and coming.—The *power* conferred upon Christ after being glorified in His passion and resurrection, and His *coming* again to judgment. (Comp. chap. iii. 4; Matt. xxiv. 3, 27; 1 Cor. xv. 23; &c., &c., where the same Greek word is used.) In this power He will come again. His first coming at the Incarnation would neither be the usual meaning of the word nor would suit the context.

But were eyewitnesses.—More literally, *but by having been made eye-witnesses*. "It was not by following fables that we made known to you His power and coming, but by having been admitted eye-witnesses." The word for "eye-witness" is sometimes a technical term for one who was admitted to the highest grade of initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries. This meaning would be very applicable here; but it may be doubted whether St. Peter would be familiar with this use of the word. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The kindred verb, "to be an eye-witness," occurs in 1 Pet. ii. 12; iii. 2, and nowhere else—a coincidence worth noting. The words of another witness of the Transfiguration,

"And we beheld His glory," &c. (John i. 14), should be compared with the passage before us.

Of his majesty.—At the Transfiguration, which was a foretaste and an earnest of the glory of His second coming. This is St. Peter's view of it; and that it is the correct one is perhaps shown by the Gospels themselves. All three accounts of the Transfiguration are preceded by the declaration, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom," or similar words (Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27). Apparently the Transfiguration was regarded by Christ Himself as in *some* sense the coming of the Son of man.

(17) **For he received.**—Literally, *For having received*. The sentence is unfinished, owing to the long dependent clause, "when there came . . . well pleased." The natural ending would be, "He had us as His attendants to hear it," or something of a similar nature.

Honour and glory.—Both refer to the voice from heaven. To make "honour" refer to the voice, and "glory" to the light shining from Christ's body, about which nothing has been said, is forced and unnatural.

(18) And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with

him in the holy mount.

(19) We have also a more sure word of prophecy;

When there came such a voice to him.—Better, *in that a voice was borne to Him speaking thus*. The expression, “a voice was borne to Him,” is peculiar, and occurs nowhere else. The Greek for “the grace that is to be brought to you” (1 Pet. i. 13) is parallel to it, and is another small coincidence worth noting. Note also that the writer has not slavishly followed any of the three accounts of the Transfiguration, which a forger might be expected to do. A genuine witness, knowing that he is on firm ground, can afford to take his own line; a “claimant” must carefully learn and follow the lines of others.

From the excellent glory.—Rather, *by the excellent glory*—another unique expression. The preposition “by” almost compels us to reject the interpretation that either the bright cloud or heaven itself is meant. It is rather a periphrasis for God. In Deut. xxxiii. 26, God is called by the LXX., “the Excellent of the sky.”

This is my beloved Son . . .—The Greek is almost the same as in St. Matthew’s account (chap. xvii. 5); but “hear him” is omitted, and for “in Whom” we here have, “unto Whom,” which can scarcely be brought into the English sentence. The meaning is “unto Whom my good pleasure came, and on Whom it abides.” (Comp. Matt. xii. 18, and Clem., *Hom.* III. liii.)

(18) And this voice which came from heaven we heard.
—Rather, *And this voice we heard*

borne from heaven: We were ear-witnesses of the voice coming from heaven, as we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. It was no vision, it was no hallucination. We all heard, and we all saw; so that I have the highest authority for what I would now impress upon you. A voice which I myself heard borne from heaven to earth, in the midst of glory which I myself saw, foretelling the glory that is yet to come.

In the holy mount.—It is, perhaps, not even “partly right” to say that the epithet “holy” indicates a view of the event later than that of the Evangelists, and points to a miracle-loving age. Rather, it indicates a view many centuries older than the Evangelists—that wherever God had specially manifested Himself was “holy ground” (Ex. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15. Comp. Gen. xxviii. 16, 17; Ex. xix. 12; Acts vii. 33.) The expression would be natural to any Jew speaking of the Transfiguration. (See *Introduction*, I. c.)

(19) **We have also a more sure word of prophecy.**—Rather, *And we have the prophetic word more sure* (so Rheims alone); or, *And we have, as something more sure, the prophetic word*, as a second proof of the truth of my teaching respecting Christ’s coming. The expression, “the prophetic word,” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. “The Scripture” given below (Note on chap. iii. 4), as quoted by Clement of Rome, is quoted again in the so-called Second

whereunto ye do well that
ye take heed, as unto a

light that shineth in a dark
place, until the day dawn,

Epistle of Clement (chap. xi.) as "the prophetic word." The quotation in both cases is probably from some uncanonical book of prophecies. Here the expression means the whole body of prophecy respecting the subject in hand; but the meaning of the whole sentence is not quite clear. It may mean (i.) that the Transfiguration has made prophecies more sure, for we who were there have thus witnessed their fulfilment. In this case, however, we should have expected something more than "and" to introduce the statement, such as "and hence," "and thus," "whereby," &c. Or it may mean (ii.) that in the prophetic word we have something more sure than the voice from heaven. Here a simple "and" is natural enough; and the word of prophecy is suitably compared with the voice from heaven. But how can the word of prophets be more sure than the voice of God? In itself it cannot be so; but it may be so regarded (1) in reference to those who did not hear, but only heard of, the voice from heaven; (2) in reference to the subject in hand. (1) For the readers of this Epistle the many utterances of a long line of prophets, expounded by a school of teachers only second to the prophets themselves, might easily be "more sure" evidence than the narrative of a single writer; and "if they heard not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded" by the report of a voice from heaven. (2) The Transfiguration, though an earnest of Christ's future glory, was not so clear a promise of it as

the express words of prophecy. If this latter interpretation be right, we have another mark of authenticity. A forger would be likely to magnify his own advantage in hearing the voice from heaven over the ordinary proofs open to every one. In any case, the coincidence with 1 Pet. i. 10—12 must not be overlooked. (Comp. also St. Peter's speech, Acts iii. 20, 21.)

Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.—Or, *and ye do well in giving heed to it*—a gentle mode of exhortation, by assuming that the thing urged is being done. The exhortation is quite in harmony with 1 Pet. i. 10. We have a similar construction in 2 Pet. ii. 10, "Do not tremble in speaking evil."

A light that shineth.—Better, *a lamp that shineth*. Prophecy, like the Baptist, is a "lamp that is lighted and shineth," preparatory to the Light. (See Note on John v. 35.) Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, *circ.* A.D. 170, has (*Autolycus* II. xiii.) "His word, *shining as a lamp* in a chamber;" too slight a parallel to this passage to be relied upon as evidence that Theophilus knew our Epistle. (See below, second Note on verse 21.)

In a dark place.—This translation is somewhat doubtful. The word rendered "dark" occurs here only in the New Testament, and its usual meaning is "dry." From "dry" we pass easily through "rough" to "dirty," meanings which the word has elsewhere (comp. the Latin *squalidus*); but the passage from "dirty" to "dark" is less easy, and there is

and the day star arise in
your hearts: ⁽²⁰⁾ knowing

this first, that no prophecy
of the scripture is of any

lack of authority for it. "In a waste place" would perhaps be safer; and the image would then be that prophecy is like camp-fires in the desert, which may keep one from going utterly astray, till sunrise frees one from difficulty. The "waste place" is either the wilderness of this world or the tangled life of the imperfect Christian.

Until the day dawn.—Literally, *until the day beam through the gloom*. Here, again, the meaning may be twofold: (1) Christ's return in glory to illumine the wilderness of this world, to clear off its obscurities, and show the way through its mazes; or (2) the clearer vision of the purified Christian, whose eye is single and his whole body full of light. (Comp. 1 John ii. 8.) No comma at dawn; "in your hearts" belongs to *both* "dawn" and "arise," if to either.

And the day star arise.—An amplification of "until the day dawn." "Day star" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Christ calls Himself "the bright morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16).

In your hearts.—It is difficult to determine to what these words belong. The Greek admits of three constructions: (1) with "take heed"; (2) with "dawn" and "arise"; (3) with "knowing this first." The last is not probable. Perhaps "and ye do well in giving heed to it in your hearts" is best—*i.e.*, let it influence your lives, not receive a mere intellectual attention.

⁽²⁰⁾ **Knowing this first.**—The participle belongs to "take heed"

in verse 19. "First" means "first of all" (1 Tim. ii. 1), not "before I tell you." In studying prophecy this is the first thing to be borne in mind.

Is of any private interpretation.—Better, *comes to be, or becomes of private interpretation*. The word rendered "interpretation" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; but the cognate verb occurs in Mark iv. 34, where it is translated "expound." (See Note there.) There can be little doubt that "interpretation," or "solution," is the right rendering here, although others have been suggested. The main question, however, is the meaning of the word rendered "private," which may also mean "its own." Hence three explanations are possible. The term may refer (1) to the recipients of the prophecies—that we may not expound prophecy according to our own fancy; or (2) to the utterers of the prophecies—that the prophets had not the power of expounding their own prophecies; or (3) to the prophecies themselves—that no prophecy comes to be of its own interpretation, *i.e.*, no prophecy explains itself. The guide to the right explanation is verse 21, which gives the reason *why* "no prophecy of the scripture," &c. This consideration excludes (3); for verse 21 yields no sense as showing why prophecy does not interpret itself. Either of the other two explanations may be right. (1) If prophecy came "by the will of man," then it might be interpreted according to man's fancy. But it did not so

private interpretation.

(21) For the prophecy came not in old time¹ by the

¹ Or, at any time.

will of man : but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

come ; consequently the interpretation must be sought elsewhere—viz., at the same source from which the prophecy itself proceeded. (2) If the prophets spoke just as they pleased, they would be the best exponents of what they meant. But they spoke under divine influence, and therefore need not know the import of their own words. Prophecy must be explained by prophecy and by history, not by the individual prophet. The whole body of prophecy, “the prophetic word” (verse 19), is our lamp in the wilderness, not the private *dicta* of any one seer. In modern phraseology, interpretation must be comparative and scientific. This view is strengthened by comparing 1 Peter i. 10—12, where it is stated that the prophets did not know how or when their own predictions would be fulfilled. Possibly this passage is meant to refer to 1 Pet. i. 10—12, and if so, we have a mark of genuineness ; a forger would have made the reference more clear. If the coincidence is accidental, this also points in the same direction ; in any case, the coincidence is worth noting.

(21) **For the prophecy came not in old time.**—Rather, *For prophecy was never sent, or brought.* Wiclif and Rheims alone have “brought,” in all the rest “came.” The verb is the same as that used of the voice from heaven (verses 17 and 18), and also in this verse for “moved,” so that there is a telling antithesis, difficult to preserve in English. Prophecy was not brought

in by men ; but men were brought to utter it by the Spirit. (Comp. 2 John, verse 10.) The rendering in the margin is right—“not at any time,” rather than “not in old time.” “Not at any time”—“never,” which both Tyndale and Cranmer have ; Wiclif has “not any time.” The erroneous “in old time” comes from Geneva.

But holy men of God . . .—The Greek is uncertain. A reading of very high authority would give us, *But men spoke from God moved by the Holy Ghost.* This is probably to be preferred. Men spoke not out of their own hearts, but as commissioned by God ; not “by the will of man,” but under the influence of the Holy Spirit. (Comp. St. Peter’s speech at the election of Matthias, and again in Solomon’s Porch, Acts i. 16 ; iii. 18.) The word for “moved” is a strong one, meaning “borne along,” as a ship before the wind (Acts xxvii. 16, 17). Theophilus of Antioch (*Autolyceus*, II. ix.) writes, “men of God, moved (or, *filled*) by the Holy Ghost, and becoming prophets, inspired and made wise by God Himself, became taught of God.” Here, again, the parallel is too slight to be relied on as evidence that Theophilus was acquainted with this Epistle. (See above, third Note on verse 19.) The same may be said of a passage in Hippolytus (*Antichrist*, ii.), “These fathers were furnished with the Spirit and largely honoured by the Word Himself . . . and when moved by Him the Prophets announced what God willed. For

CHAPTER II.—⁽¹⁾ But

A.D. 66.

Chap. ii. 1—3.

First prediction:

False teachers
shall arise.

there were
false prophets
also among
the people,

even as there shall be false
teachers among you, who
privily shall bring in dam-
nable heresies, even deny-
ing the Lord that bought

they spake not of their own power,
neither did they declare what
pleased themselves," &c., &c.

Some have fancied that these
last three verses (19—21) savour
of Montanism, and are evidence of
the late origin of the Epistle. But
what is said here of the gift of pro-
phesy is not more than we find
elsewhere in the New Testament
(Matt. i. 22; ii. 15; Acts i. 16;
iii. 18); and in the Old Testament
(Num. xi. 17, 25, 29; 1 Sam. x. 6,
10; xix. 20, 23; Jer. i. 5—7).
Montanists used much stronger
language, as readers of Tertullian
know. With them prophecy was
ecstasy and frenzy; prophets
ceased to be men—their reason
left them, and they became mere
instruments on which the Spirit
played. The wording of these
verses points to an age previous to
Montanism. A Montanist would
have said more; an opponent of
Montanism would have guarded
himself against Montanist mis-
construction.

II.

By a perfectly natural transition,
we pass to an entirely different
subject—from exhortation to show
forth Christian graces to a warning
against corrupt doctrine. True
prophets (chap. i. 21) suggest false
prophets, and false prophets sug-
gest false teachers. On the charac-
ter of the false teachers here
attacked see *Introduction*, IV. There
are several prophecies in the New

Testament similar to the one con-
tained in this and the next chapter
(Acts xx. 28—31; 2 Thess. ii. 3—7;
1 Tim. iv. 1—7; 2 Tim. iii. 1—9;
iv. 3, 4; comp. 1 John ii. 18; iv. 3).
Those in 2 Thess. and 2 Tim. iii. are
specially worthy of comparison, as
containing, like the present chapter,
a mixture of future and present. (See
Introduction, I. c, γ.) The fervour
and impetuosity with which the
writer attacks the evil before him
are thoroughly in harmony with
St. Peter's character. (Comp. Notes
on Jude throughout.)

FIRST PREDICTION: False teachers
shall have great success and certain
ruin (verses 1—10).

⁽¹⁾ But there were false pro-
phets also.—To bring out the
contrast between true and false
prophets more strongly, the clause
that in meaning is secondary has
been made primary in form. The
meaning is, "There shall be false
teachers among you, as there were
false prophets among the Jews;"
the *form* is, "But (in contrast to
the true prophets just mentioned)
there were false prophets as well,
even as," &c.

Shall be false teachers
among you.—We must add
"also." With this view of Chris-
tians as the antitype of the chosen
people comp. 1 Pet. ii. 9. The word
for "false teachers" occurs here
only. It is probably analogous to
"false witnesses," and means those

them, and bring upon them- | selves swift destruction.

who teach what is false, rather than to "false Christs," in which case it would mean pretending to be teachers when they are not. "False prophets" has both meanings—sham prophets and prophesying lies. Justin Martyr, about A.D. 145 (*Trypho*, lxxxii.), has "Just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets" (he is addressing a Jew), "so are there now many false teachers amongst us." Another possible reference to this Epistle in Justin is given below on chap. iii. 8. As they occur close together, they seem to render it probable that Justin knew our Epistle. "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in heresies of destruction," is quoted in a homily attributed, on doubtful authority, to Hippolytus. (See below, on chap. iii. 3.)

Privily shall bring in.—Comp. Jude, verse 4, and Gal. ii. 4; and see Notes in both places. Comp. also the *Shepherd* of Hermas, *Sim.* VIII. vi. 5.

Damnable heresies.—Rather, *parties (full) of destruction* (Phil. i. 28), "whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 19). Wiclif and Rheims have "sects of perdition." "Damnable heresies" comes from Geneva—altogether a change for the worse. The Greek word *hairesis* is sometimes translated "sect" in our version (Acts v. 17; xv. 5; xxiv. 5), sometimes "heresy" (Acts xxiv. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20). Neither word gives quite the true meaning of the term in the New Testament, where it points rather to divisions than doctrines, and always to parties inside the Church,

not to sects that have separated from it. The Greek word for "destruction" occurs six times in this short Epistle, according to the inferior text used by our translators (in the best text five times), and is rendered by them in no less than five different ways: "damnable" and "destruction" in this verse; "pernicious ways," verse 2; "damnation," verse 3; "perdition," chap. iii. 7; "destruction," chap. iii. 16.

Even denying the Lord that bought them.—Better, *denying even the Master that bought them*. (See Note on Jude, verse 4.) The phrase is remarkable as coming from one who himself denied his Master. Would a forger have ventured to make St. Peter write thus?

This text is conclusive against Calvinistic doctrines of partial redemption; the Apostle declares that these impious false teachers were redeemed by Jesus Christ. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 18.)

And bring upon themselves.—More literally, *bringing upon themselves*. The two participles, "denying" and "bringing," without any conjunction to connect them, are awkward, and show that the writer's strong feeling is already beginning to ruffle the smoothness of his language.

Swift destruction—i.e., coming suddenly and unexpectedly, so as to preclude escape; not necessarily coming *soon*. (See first Note on chap. i. 14.) The reference, probably, is to Christ's sudden return to judgment (chap. iii. 10), scoffing at which was one of the ways in which they "denied

(2) And many shall follow their pernicious¹ ways; by reason of whom the way

¹ Or, *lascivious ways*, as some copies read.

of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they

their Master." By their lives they denied that He had "bought them." He had bought them for His service, and they served their own lusts.

(2) Many shall follow their pernicious ways.—"Pernicious ways" is a translation of the plural of the word just rendered "destruction." (See fourth Note on verse 1.) But here the reading is undoubtedly wrong. The margin has the right reading—*lascivious ways* (or better, *wanton ways*)—being the plural of the word translated "wantonness" in verse 18. Wiclif has "lecheries;" Rheims "riotousness."

The connection between false doctrine and licentiousness was often real, and is so still in some cases—*e.g.*, Mormonism. But it was often asserted and believed without foundation. Impurity was the common charge to bring against those of a different creed, whether between heathen and Christian, or between different divisions of Christians.

By reason of whom.—The many who are led astray are meant, rather than the original seducers. (Comp. Rom. ii. 24.)

The way of truth.—(See Note on Acts ix. 2.) "The way of truth" occurs in Clement of Alexandria (*Cohort. ad Gentes*, x.) the only near approach to anything in 2 Peter in all the writings of his that have come down to us. This is strong evidence that he did not know the Epistle, especially as references are frequent to 1 Peter,

which is sometimes quoted thus; "Peter in his Epistle says" (*Strom.* IV. xx.).

Shall be evil spoken of.—By the heathen, who will judge of the way of truth by the evil lives of the many who have really been seduced from it, though they profess still to follow it. In the homily commonly called the *Second Epistle of Clement* (xiii.) there is a remarkable amplification of this statement. Our Epistle was probably known to the writer of the homily, who to a considerable extent preaches against similar evils.

(3) And through covetousness.—Better, *In covetousness*. This is the atmosphere in which they live. (See Notes on verse 18 and chap. i. 1, 2, 4, 13.) Wiclif and Rheims have "in." Simon Magus offering St. Peter money, which no doubt he was accustomed to take himself for his teaching, may illustrate this (Acts viii. 18; comp. 1 Tim. vi. 5; Tit. i. 10, 11). These false teachers, like the Greek Sophists, taught for money. A bombastic mysticism, promising to reveal secrets about the unseen world and the future, was a very lucrative profession in the last days of Paganism, and it passed over to Christianity as an element in various heresies. (Comp. the *Shepherd* of Hermas, *Sim.* IX. xix. 3.)

Make merchandise of you.—The verb means literally to *travel*, especially as a merchant on business; and hence "to be a merchant," "to trade," and, with

with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth

not. ⁽⁴⁾ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered

Chap. ii. 4—10.
Their certain
ruin

an accusative, "to deal in," "make merchandise of." (Comp. our commercial phrase, "to travel in" such and such goods.) It may also mean simply "to gain," or "gain over," which would make good sense here; but our version is perhaps better. The word occurs elsewhere only in Jas. iv. 13. "With feigned words" possibly refers back to "cunningly devised fables" (chap. i. 16).

Lingereth not.—Literally, *is not idle*, the cognate verb of the adjective in chap. i. 8. Their sentence has long since been pronounced, is working, and in due time will strike them. We have a similar thought in 1 Pet. iv. 17.

Their damnation slumbereth not.—Better, *their destruction*. (See fourth Note on verse 1.) Wielik and Rheims have "perdition." The destruction involved in the judgment pronounced by God is awake and on its way to overtake them. The word for "slumbereth" occurs in Matt. xxv. 5 only.

We now pass on to see how it is that this judgment "*of a long time*" has been working. It was pronounced against all sinners, such as they are, from the first beginning of the world.

⁽⁴⁻⁸⁾ Three instances of divine vengeance, proving that great wickedness never goes unpunished.

⁽⁴⁾ For if God.—The sentence

has no proper conclusion. The third instance of God's vengeance is so prolonged by the addition respecting Lot, that the apodosis is wanting, the writer in his eagerness having lost the thread of the construction. The three instances here are in chronological order (wanton angels, Food, Sodom and Gomorrha), while those in Jude are not (unbelievers in the wilderness, impure angels, Sodom and Gomorrha). Both arrangements are natural—this as being chronological, that of St. Jude for reasons stated in the Notes there. (See on verse 5.)

The angels that sinned.—Better, *the angels for their sin*: it gives the reason why they were not spared, and points to some definite sin. What sin is meant? Not that which preceded the history of the human race, commonly called the fall of the angels—of that there is no record in the Old Testament; and, moreover, it affords no close analogy to the conduct of the false teachers. St. Jude is somewhat more explicit (Jude, verse 6); he says it was for not keeping their own dignity—for deserting their proper home; and the reference, both there and here, is either to a common interpretation of Gen. vi. 2 (that by "the sons of God" are meant "angels"), or, more probably, to distinct and frequent statements in the *Book of Enoch*, that certain angels sinned by having intercourse with women—*e.g.*, chaps. vii. 1, 2; cv. 13 (Lawrence's

them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁽⁵⁾ and spared not the old world, but

saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world

translation). Not improbably these false teachers made use of this book, and possibly of these passages, in their corrupt teaching. Hence St. Peter uses it as an *argumentum ad hominem* against them, and St. Jude, recognising the allusion, adopts it and makes it more plain; or both writers, knowing the *Book of Enoch* well, and calculating on their readers knowing it also, used it to illustrate their arguments and exhortations, just as St. Paul uses the Jewish belief of the rock following the Israelites. (See Note on 1 Cor. x. 4.)

Cast them down to hell.—The Greek word occurs nowhere else, but its meaning is plain—to cast down to Tartarus; and though “Tartarus” occurs neither in the Old nor in the New Testament, it probably is the same as Gehenna. (See Note on Matt. v. 22.)

Into chains of darkness.—Critical reasons seem to require us to substitute *dens*, or *caves*, for “chains.” The Greek words for “chains” and for “caves” here are almost exactly alike; and “caves” may have been altered into “chains” in order to bring this passage into closer harmony with Jude, verse 6, although the word used by St. Jude for “chains” is different. (See Note there.) If “chains of darkness” be retained (comp. Wisd. xvii. 17), there still remains the doubt whether “into chains of darkness” should go with “delivered” or with “cast down into hell.” The

former arrangement seems the better.

⁽⁵⁾ **And spared not the old world.**—The fact that the Flood is taken as the second instance of divine vengeance gives us no clue as to the source of the first instance. In the *Book of Enoch* the Flood follows closely upon the sin of the angels, as in Gen. vi. upon that of the sons of God, so that in either case the first instance would naturally suggest the second.

Noah the eighth person.—According to a common Greek idiom, this means *Noah and seven others*; and the point of it is that the punishment must have been signal indeed if only eight persons out of a whole world escaped. The coincidence with 1 Pet. iii. 20 must not pass unobserved, especially as there the mention of “spirits in prison” immediately precedes, just as here, the angels in “caves of darkness.” The suggestion that eight is here a mystical number (the sabbatical seven and one over) is quite gratuitous; as also that “eighth” may mean eighth from Enos, which would be utterly pointless, there being neither mention of Enos nor the faintest allusion to him. (Comp. Clement I. vii. 6; ix. 4; and see Note on verse 9.)

Bringing in the flood upon the world.—“In” should be omitted. The phrase is exactly parallel to “bring upon themselves swift destruction” in verse 1. The word for “bring” is the same in both cases.

of the ungodly; ⁽⁶⁾ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them*

an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁽⁷⁾ and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the

⁽⁶⁾ And turning—The construction still depends upon the “if” in verse 4. (See Note on Jude, verse 7.)

Condemned them with an overthrow.—Or, perhaps, *to an overthrow*, like “condemn to death” in Matt. xx. 18. The very word here used for “overthrow”—*catastrophē*—is used by the LXX. of the overthrow of these cities (Gen. xix. 29); in the New Testament it occurs in 2 Tim. ii. 4 only.

An ensample unto those.—Literally, *an ensample of those*—i.e., of the punishment which such sinners must expect. (Comp. “Are set for an example,” Jude, verse 7.)

⁽⁷⁾ And delivered just Lot. —Better, *righteous Lot*; it is the same adjective as occurs twice in the next verse. These repetitions of the same word, of which there are several examples in this Epistle (“destruction” thrice, chap. ii. 1—3; various repetitions, chap. iii. 10—12; “look for” thrice, chap. iii. 12—14, &c.), and which have been stigmatised as showing poverty of language, are perfectly natural in St. Peter, and not like the laboured efforts of a writer endeavouring to personate him. A person writing under strong emotion does not stop to pick his words; he uses the same word over and over again if it expresses what he means and no other word at once occurs to him. This is still more likely to be the case when a person is writing in a foreign language. The fact that

such repetitions are frequent in the Second Epistle, but not in the First, is not only fully explained by the circumstances, but, as being so entirely in harmony with them, may be regarded as a mark of genuineness. “Delivered righteous Lot.” Here, as in the case of the Flood (verse 5), the destruction of the guilty suggests the preservation of the innocent. Is it fanciful to think that these lights in a dark picture are characteristic of one who had himself “denied the Master who bought him,” and yet had been preserved like Noah and rescued like Lot? This brighter side is wanting in Jude, so that in the strictly historical illustrations this Epistle is more full than the other (see Note on verse 15); it is where apocryphal books seem to be alluded to that St. Jude has more detail.

The filthy conversation.—Literally, *behaviour in wantonness* (comp. verses 2 and 18)—i.e., licentious mode of life. The word for “conversation,” or “behaviour,” is a favourite one with St. Peter—six times in the First Epistle, twice in this (chap. iii. 11); elsewhere in the New Testament only five times.

Of the wicked.—Literally, *of the lawless*—a word peculiar to this Epistle; we have it again in chap. iii. 17. The word translated “abominable” in 1 Pet. iv. 3 is closely allied to it.

The judgment on Sodom and

wicked: ⁽⁸⁾ (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with

their unlawful deeds;)
⁽⁹⁾ the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of

Gomorrha forms a fitting complement to that of the Flood as an instance of God's vengeance, a judgment by fire being regarded as more awful than a judgment by flood, as is more distinctly shown in chap. iii. 6, 7, where the total destruction of the world by fire is contrasted with the transformation of it wrought by the Flood.

⁽⁸⁾ **For that righteous man.**—This epithet, here thrice given to Lot, seems at first sight to be at variance with his willingness to remain, for the sake of worldly advantages, in the midst of such wickedness. But "righteous" is a relative term; and in this case we must look at Lot both in comparison with the defective morality of the age and also with the licentiousness of those with whom he is here contrasted. Moreover, in the midst of this corruption he preserves some of the brighter features of his purer nomad life, especially that "chivalrous hospitality" (Gen. xix. 2, 3, 8) to which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to point as a model: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (chap. xiii. 2). Add to this the fact of God's rescuing him and his family, especially in connection with the declaration that ten "righteous" people would have saved the whole city (Gen. xviii. 32), and his ready belief and obedience when told to leave all, and also the fact that Zoar was

saved at his intercession (chap. xix. 21), and we must then admit that the epithet "righteous" as applied to Lot is by no means without warrant.

⁽⁹⁾ **The Lord knoweth.**—This is the main sentence to which the various conditional clauses beginning verse 4 (see Note there) have been leading. But the construction is disjointed, owing to the eagerness of the writer, and the main clause does not fit on to the introductory clauses very smoothly. Even the main clause itself is interrupted by the insertion of "to deliver the godly out of temptations." What the writer *especially* wishes to prove is that "the Lord knoweth how to reserve the ungodly unto the day of judgment under punishment," as is shown by the "for" connecting verse 4 with verse 3.

To be punished.—Rather, *being punished, or under punishment.* They are already suffering punishment while waiting for their final doom. The error in our version is parallel to that in Acts ii. 47, where "such as should be saved" stands instead of "those who were being saved." The participle is present, not future.

The same double moral—that God will save the righteous and punish the ungodly—is drawn from the same historical instance by Clement of Rome (*Epistle to the Corinthians*, xi.): "For his hospitality and godliness Lot was saved

judgment to be punished :
 (10) but chiefly them that
 walk after the
 flesh in the
 lust of un-
 cleanness, and
 despise government.¹ Pre-

Chap. ii. 10—22.
 Detailed descrip-
 tion of the false
 teachers.

^a Jude 8.

¹ Or,
domi-
nion.

² Some
 read,
against
them-
selves.

sumptuous ^a are they, self-
 willed, they are not afraid
 to speak evil of dignities.
 (11) Whereas angels, which
 are greater in power and
 might, bring not railing
 accusation against them²

from Sodom, when all the country round was judged by fire and brimstone; the Master having thus fore-shown that He forsaketh not them who set their hope on Him, but appointeth unto punishment and torment them who swerve aside." A possible, but not a certain, reference to our Epistle. (See Note below on chap. iii. 4.)

(10) **Them that walk after the flesh.**—Less definite than Jude, verse 7. Here there is nothing about going *away* or *astray*, nor about the flesh being "other" than is allowed. This is natural; Jude's remark applying to the inhabitants of the cities of the plain in particular, this to sensual persons generally.

In the lust of uncleanness.—Better, *in the lust of pollution*—i.e., the lust that causes pollution. The exact word occurs nowhere else; the same word, all but the termination, occurs in verse 20, and nowhere else.

Despise government.—(Comp. "despise dominion," Jude, verse 8.) Our version is minutely perverse. The word translated "government" here and "dominion" in Jude is one and the same in the Greek; whereas the words translated in both places "despise" are different.

Presumptuous are they.—A fresh verse should begin here;

the construction is entirely changed, and a fresh start made. From "the unjust" to "government" the reference is to ungodly and sensual people in general; here we return to the false teachers in particular. *Audacious* would be more literal than "presumptuous." The word is found here only. On the change to the present tense, see *Introduction*, I., c, γ.

Speak evil of dignities.—The exact meaning of "dignities," or "glories," is not clear, either here or in Jude, verse 8. The context in both places seems to show that spiritual powers alone are intended, and that earthly powers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are not included, much less exclusively indicated. The construction here resembles that in chap. i. 19: "Do not tremble in (or, *while*) speaking evil of dignities," like "ye do well in taking heed." These men deny the existence of, or irreverently speak slightly of, those spiritual agencies by means of which God conducts the government of the world.

(11) **Whereas angels.**—Literally, *Where angels*.—i.e., in circumstances in which angels. This verse, if it refers to the same incident as Jude, verse 9, seems at first sight to tell somewhat in favour of the priority of Jude; for then, only when compared with Jude,

before the Lord. ⁽¹²⁾ But | these, as natural brute

verse 9, does it become intelligible. The inference is that this is an abbreviation of Jude, rather than Jude an amplification of this. But (1) such an inference is at best only probable. The writer of this Epistle might possibly count on his readers at once understanding his allusion to a tradition that may have been well known, while St. Jude thought it best to point out the allusion more plainly. (2) It is possible that the contest alluded to is not that between Satan and Michael about the body of Moses, but that between Satan and the angel of the Lord about Joshua the high priest (Zech. iii. 1, 2). (3) It is also possible that it does not refer to any contest with Satan at all, but merely to angels not denouncing these false teachers before God, but leaving them to His judgment. If either (2) or (3) is correct, the argument for the priority of Jude falls to the ground. If (1) is right, then the argument really favours the priority of 2 Peter; for if the author of 2 Peter had Jude before him (and this is maintained by those who contend for the priority of Jude), and wished to make use of St. Jude's illustration, why should he so deface St. Jude's statement of it as to make it almost unintelligible? The reason suggested is altogether inadequate—that reverential feelings made him wish to avoid mentioning Michael's name—a name that every Jew was perfectly familiar with in the Book of Daniel.

Greater in power and might.—This is taken in two ways—either “greater than these audacious, self-willed men,” which

is the simpler and more natural explanation; or “greater than other angels,” as if it were a periphrasis for “archangels,” which is rather awkward language. But either explanation makes good sense.

Railing accusation against them.—Literally, a railing judgment. Wiclif has “doom,” all the rest “judgment”; both superior to “accusation.” “Against them,” if the reference is either to the contest about the body of Moses or to Zech. iii. 1, 2, must mean against “dignities,” and “dignities” must here mean *fallen* angels, who are considered still to be worthy of reverence on account of their original glory and indefectible spiritual nature. The position is, therefore, that what angels do not venture to say of devils, this, and worse than this, these audacious men dare to say of angels and other unseen powers. But “against them” may possibly mean “against the false teachers,” *i.e.*, they speak evil of angels, yet the angels bring no denunciation against them, but leave all judgment to God (Deut. xxxii. 35, 36; Rom. xii. 19; Heb. x. 30). This explanation avoids the awkwardness of making “dignities” in verse 10 mean unseen powers generally, and chiefly *good* ones, while “against dignities” in this verse has to mean against *evil* powers only.

⁽¹²⁾ But these, as natural brute beasts.—Omit “natural.” This verse appears to tell strongly in favour of the priority of our Epistle. The literary form of Jude, verse 10, is so very superior; the antithesis (quite wanting here) between abusing what they cannot

beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall

utterly perish in their own corruption; ⁽¹³⁾ and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that

know and misusing what they cannot help knowing, is so telling, and would be so easily remembered, that it is improbable that a writer who was willing to adopt so much would not have adopted in this respect also; and whichever writer is second, it is evident that he was willing to adopt his predecessor's material almost to any extent. On the other hand, there is nothing improbable in a writer who knew this verse improving upon it by writing Jude, verse 10. The verses, similar as they are in much of their wording, are very different in their general drift. Jude, verse 10, is simply an epigrammatic description of these ungodly men; this verse is a denunciation of final ruin against them.

Made to be taken and destroyed.—Literally, *born naturally for capture and destruction*. "Natural" comes in better here as a kind of adverb than as an additional epithet to beasts. The force of it is that these animals cannot help themselves. It is their nature to rush after what will prove their ruin; but the false teachers voluntarily seek their own destruction against nature. This verse contains one of the repetitions noticed above (see on verse 7) as characteristic of this Epistle. The word for "destruction" and "corruption" is one and the same in the Greek, the destroying being literal in the first case, moral in the second. Moreover, the word for "perish" is from the same root. "Like

brutes born for capture and destruction, these men shall be destroyed in their destruction." But such a translation would be misleading in English.

Shall utterly perish.—A reading of higher authority gives us, *shall even perish*.

In their own corruption.—"Own" may be omitted. Their present evil life anticipates and contains within itself the elements of their final destruction. Thus they "bring it upon themselves" (verse 1). The right division of the sentences here cannot be decided with certainty; the Apostle hurries on, in the full flood of his denunciation, without paying much attention to the precise form of his language. On the whole, it seems best to place only a comma at the end of verse 12, with a full stop or colon at "unrighteousness," and to make what follows part of the long sentence, of which the main verb is "are gone astray" in verse 15.

⁽¹³⁾ **And shall receive.**—Literally, *about to receive* (as they are). (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 9; v. 4; see also *Epistle of Barnabas*, iv. 12.)

As they that count.—We must begin a fresh sentence, and somewhat modify the translation. "To riot" is too strong; the word means "delicate fare, dainty living, luxury," and if the exact meaning be retained, this will necessitate a change of "in the day time." For though "rioting in the day time" makes good sense—revelry even among professed pleasure-seekers—

count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their

¹ Gr. *an adulteress.*

own deceivings while they feast with you; ⁽¹⁴⁾ having eyes full of adultery,¹ and that cannot

being usually confined to the night (1 Thess. v. 7)—"dainty fare in the day time" does not seem to have much point. The meaning is perhaps, "for the day," without thought for the morrow, *counting luxury for the moment a pleasure*—the doctrine of the Cyreniacs, and the instinct of "brute beasts." In the *Shepherd* of Hermas (*Sim. VI. iv. 4*) there is a passage which may possibly be an echo of this: "The time of luxury and deceit is one hour, but the hours of torment have the power of thirty days; if then a man luxuriates for one day," &c., &c. (See below on verses 15, 20; chap. iii. 5.)

Sporting themselves.—The word is a compound of the one just translated "luxury"; hence *luxuriating*. It is worth noting that the words for "spots and blemishes" exactly correspond to the words translated "without blemish and without spot" in 1 Pet. i. 19. (See below on chap. iii. 14.)

With their own deceivings.—Better, *in their deceits*, if this is the right reading. But both here and in Jude, verse 12, the reading is uncertain, authorities being divided between *agapai*, "love-feasts," and *apatai*, "deceits." In Jude the balance, on purely critical grounds, is decidedly in favour of "love-feasts;" here (though much less decidedly) in favour of "deceits." In Jude the context confirms the reading "love-feasts;" here the context is neutral, or slightly inclines to "love-feasts,"

to which "while they feast with you" must in any case refer. But if "love-feasts" be right in Jude (and this is so probable that we may almost assume it), this in itself is strong support to the same reading here. Whichever writer is prior, so strange a change from "deceits" to "love-feasts" would hardly have been made deliberately; whereas, in copying mechanically, the interchange might easily be made, the words being so similar. The change from "spots" to "rocks," if such a change has been deliberately made by either writer (see on Jude, verse 12), would not be parallel to a change between "deceits" and "love-feasts." The one is a mere variation of the metaphor, the other an alteration of the meaning. In 2 Thess. ii. 10 there is possibly an intentional play upon the similarity of these two words.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Of adultery.**—Literally, *of an adulteress*. This verse has no counterpart in Jude.

That cannot cease from sin.—Literally, *that cannot be made to cease from sin*. (Comp. attentively 1 Pet. iv. 1.) It was precisely because these men refused to "suffer in the flesh," but, on the contrary, gave the flesh all possible license on principle, that they could not "cease from sin."

Beguiling.—Strictly, *enticing with bait*. We have the same word in verse 18, James i. 14, and nowhere else. If "deceits" be the right reading in verse 13, this

cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: ⁽¹⁵⁾ which have forsaken the right way,

and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ⁽¹⁶⁾ but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb

clause throws some light on it. In any case, the metaphor from fishing, twice in this Epistle and only once elsewhere, may point to a fisherman of Galilee. (Comp. Matt. xvii. 27.)

With covetous practices.—Better, *in covetousness*. The word is singular, as in verse 3, according to all the best MSS. and versions.

Cursed children.—Rather, *children of malediction*. So Rheims; Wiclif has “sones of cursynge.” They are devoted to execration; malediction has adopted them as its own. (Comp. “son of perdition,” John xvii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3.)

⁽¹⁵⁾ **The right way.**—(Comp. Acts xiii. 10.) In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (I. Vis. III. vii. 1) we have “Who have believed indeed, but through their doubting have forsaken their true way.” (See Notes on verses 1, 3, 13, 20; chap. iii. 5.)

Are gone astray.—The main verb of this long sentence. Here parallels with Jude begin again. In the historical incident of Balaam, as in that of Sodom and Gomorrah, our Epistle is more detailed than Jude (see on verse 7). The past tenses in this verse are quite in harmony with the view that this chapter is a genuine prediction. (Comp. Gen. xlix. 9, 15, 23, 24.) The future foretold with such confidence as to be spoken of as already past is a common form for prophecy to assume.

Balaam the son of Bosor.—

Bosor seems to be a dialectical variation from Beor, arising out of peculiar Aramaic pronunciation—a slight indication that the writer was a Jew of Palestine. The resemblance between these false teachers consisted in their running counter to God's will for their own profit, and in prostituting their office to an infamous purpose, which brought ruin on the community. He, like they, had “enticed unstable souls,” and had “a heart exercised in covetousness.” A comparison of this passage with Rev. ii. 14, 15, gives countenance to the view that among the false teachers thus stigmatised the Nicolaitans may be included. In Jude, verse 11, these ungodly men are compared not only to Balaam, but also to Cain and Korah. It seems more likely that St. Jude should add these two very opprobrious comparisons than that the vehement writer of this Epistle should reject material so suitable to his invective. If so, we have here another argument for the priority of our Epistle. (See on verse 12.)

⁽¹⁶⁾ **But was rebuked for his iniquity.**—Literally, *But had a conviction of his own transgression*—i.e., was convicted of it, or rebuked for it. His transgression was, that although as a prophet he knew the blessedness of Israel, and although God gave him leave to go only on condition of his blessing Israel, he went still cherishing a hope of

ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ⁽¹⁷⁾ These

are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the

being able to curse, and so winning Balak's promised reward.

The dumb ass.—Literally, *a dumb beast of burden*. The same word is rendered "ass" in Matt. xxi. 5, in the phrase "foal of an ass." In Palestine the ass was the most common beast of burden, horses being rare, so that in most cases "beast of burden" would necessarily mean "ass."

Forbad the madness.—Strictly, *hindered the madness*; and thus the trivial discrepancy which some would urge as existing between this passage and Num. xxii. disappears. It has been objected that not the ass, but the angel forbad Balaam from proceeding. But it was the ass which hindered the infatuation of Balaam from hurrying him to his own destruction (Num. xxii. 33). The word for "madness" is probably chosen for the sake of alliteration with "prophet"—*prophétou paraphronian*. It is a very rare formation, perhaps coined by the writer himself.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **These are wells.**—Or, *springs*; same word as John iv. 6. These men are like dried-up watering-places in the desert, which entice and mock the thirsty traveller; perhaps leading him into danger also by drawing him from places where there is water. (Comp. Jer. ii. 13; xiv. 3.) The parallel passage, Jude, verses 12, 13, is much more full than the one before us, and is more like an amplification of this than this a condensation of that—*e.g.*, would a simile so admirably suitable to false

guides as "wandering stars" have been neglected by the writer of our Epistle? A Hebrew word which occurs only twice in the Old Testament is translated by the LXX. in the one place (Gen. ii. 6) by the word here used for "well," and in the other (Job xxxvi. 27) by the word used in Jude, verse 12, for "cloud." Thus the same Hebrew might have produced "wells without water" here and "clouds without water" in Jude. This is one of the arguments used in favour of a Hebrew original of both these Epistles. Coincidences of this kind, which may easily be mere accidents of language, must be shown to be numerous before a solid argument can be based upon them. Moreover, we must remember that the writers in both cases were Jews, writing in Greek, while thinking probably in Hebrew, so that the same Hebrew thought might suggest a different Greek expression in the two cases. When we have deducted all that might easily be accounted for in this way, and also all that is perhaps purely accidental, from the not very numerous instances of a similar kind that have been collected, we shall not find much on which to build the hypothesis of these Epistles being translations from Hebrew originals. (See *Introduction to Jude, II.*)

Clouds that are carried with a tempest.—Better, *mists driven by the storm-wind*. Wiclif has "myistis." The words for "clouds" and "carried about" in

mist of darkness is reserved for ever. ⁽¹⁸⁾ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness*, those

¹ Or, for a little, or, a while, assume read.

that were clean¹ escaped from them who live in error. ⁽¹⁹⁾ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same

Jude, verse 12, are quite different, so that our version creates a false impression of great similarity. The idea is not very different from that of the "wells without water." These mists promise refreshment to the thirsty soil (Gen. ii. 6), and are so flimsy that they are blown away before they do any good. So these false teachers deceived those who were thirsting for the knowledge and liberty promised them by raising hopes which they could not satisfy.

To whom the mist of darkness.—Better, *for whom the gloom of darkness*. (See Note on Jude, verse 6.) "For ever" is wanting in authority; the words have probably been inserted from the parallel passage in Jude.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Great swelling words of vanity.**—Exaggeration, unreality, boastfulness, and emptiness are expressed by this phrase. It carries on the same idea as the waterless wells and the driven mists—great pretensions and no results. The rebuke here is not unlike the warning in 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

Allure.—Translated "beguile" in verse 14, where see Note.

Through the lusts of the flesh.—Better, *in the lusts of the flesh* (as in verse 3, and chap. i. 1, 2, 4, 13). The preposition "in" points to the sphere in which the enticement takes place; "though"

should be reserved for "wantonness" (see Note on verse 2), which is the bait used to entice.

Were clean escaped.—Both verb and adverb require correction. The margin indicates the right reading for the adverb—"for a little," or better, *by a little; scarcely*. The verb should be present, not past—*those who are scarcely escaping*, viz., the "unstable souls" of verse 14. Wiclif has "scapen a litil;" Rheims "escape a litle." The word translated "scarcely" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; that translated here "clean," and elsewhere "indeed," or "certainly," is frequent (Mark xi. 32; Luke xxiii. 47; xxiv. 34, &c. &c.) Hence the change, an unfamiliar word being, by a slight alteration, turned into a familiar one. The two Greek words are much alike.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **Promise them liberty.**—A specimen of the great "swelling words"—loud, high-sounding talk about liberty. The doctrines of Simon Magus, as reported by Irenæus (I., chap. xxiii. 3) and by Hippolytus (*Refut.* VI., chap. xiv.), show us the kind of liberty that such teachers promised—being "freed from righteousness" to become "the slaves of sin."

Servants of corruption.—Better, *bond-servants*, or *slaves of corruption*. Our translators have often done well in translating the

is he brought in bondage.

(20) For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

(21) For it had been better for them not to have

Greek word for "slave" by "servant" (see Note on chap. i. 1), but here the full force of the ignominious term should be given. Tynedale, Cranmer, and Geneva have "bond-servants;" Rheims "slaves." (Comp. "bondage of corruption," Rom. viii. 21.)

Brought in bondage.—Or, *enslaved*. We seem here to have an echo of John viii. 34 (see Notes there): "Every one who continues to commit sin is the slave of sin," words which St. Peter may have heard. Comp. Rom. vi. 16—20, which the writer may also have had in his mind. There is nothing improbable in St. Peter being well acquainted with the Epistle to the Romans during the last years of his life; the improbability would rather be in supposing that he did not know it.

(20) For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world. — Applying the general statement of the preceding verse to the case of these false teachers. In the *Shepherd* of Hermas (I. Vis. IV. iii. 2) "the black there is the world in which we dwell, and the fire - and - blood - colour (indicates) that this world must perish through blood and fire; but the golden part are ye *who have escaped this world*." Another possible reminiscence of our Epistle. (See above on verses 1, 3, 13, 15; and below, chap. iii. 5.)

Through the knowledge.—

Better, *in knowledge*, the preposition "in" pointing to that in which the escape consists. (See Note on verse 18, and comp. Luke i. 77.) The knowledge is of the same mature and complete kind as that spoken of in chap. i. 2, 3, 8 (where see Notes), showing that these men were well-instructed Christians.

Entangled therein, and overcome. — Or, *entangled and overcome thereby*, which, taking into consideration the later part of verse 19, seems to be the more probable construction.

The latter end is worse with them than the beginning.—Most certainly this should be made to correspond with Matt. xii. 45, of which it is almost an exact reproduction—their last state is worse than the first. The only difference is that the word for "is" in Matt. xii. 45 means literally "becomes," and here "has become." (Comp. the *Shepherd*, Sim. IX. xvii. 5.)

(21) It had been better for them not to have known.—There are many things of which the well-known lines,

"'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all,"

do not hold good. To have loved a great truth, to have loved a high principle, and after all to lose them, is what often causes the shipwreck of a life. To have

known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

(22) But it is happened

unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

loved Jesus Christ and again lose Him is to make shipwreck of eternal life.

The way of righteousness.—The life of the Christian. That which from a doctrinal point of view is "the way of truth" (verse 2), from a moral point of view is "the way of righteousness." So also "the faith delivered to the saints" of Jude, verse 3, is the doctrinal equivalent of "the holy commandment delivered unto them" of this verse.

(22) But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb.—More literally, *There has happened to them what the true proverb says*; "but" is of very doubtful authority. The word for "proverb" is the one used elsewhere only by St. John in his Gospel, and there translated once "parable" and thrice "proverb." "Parable," or "allegory," would have been best in all four cases (John x. 6, where see Note; xvi. 25, 29). The first proverb is found, Prov. xxvi. 11, and if that be the source of the quotation, we have here an independent translation of the Hebrew, for the LXX. gives an entirely different rendering, "dog" being the only word in common to the two Greek versions. The word for "vomit" here is possibly formed by the writer himself; that for "wallowing" is also a rare word. The LXX. adds, "and becomes abominable," which

has no equivalent in the existing Hebrew text; and it has been suggested that these words may misrepresent the Hebrew original of the second proverb here. But it is quite possible that both proverbs come from popular tradition, and not from Scripture at all. If, however, the Book of Proverbs be the source of the quotation, it is worth while noting that no less than four times in as many chapters does St. Peter recall passages from the Proverbs in the First Epistle (chaps. i. 7; ii. 17; iv. 8, 18). In the Greek neither proverb has a verb, as so often in such sayings—*a dog that has returned to his own vomit*; *a washed sow to wallowing in the mire*; just as we say, "the dog in the manger," "a fool and his money."

The word for "mire," not a very common one, is used by Irenæus of the Gnostic false teachers of his day, who taught that their fine spiritual natures could no more be hurt by sensuality than gold by mire. "For in the same way as gold when plunged in mire does not lay aside its beauty, but preserves its own nature, the mire having no power to injure the gold, so they say that they, no matter what kind of material actions they may be involved in, cannot suffer any harm, nor lose their spiritual essence." (I. chap. vi. 2.) But it is not probable that Irenæus knew our Epistle.

CHAPTER III.—

A.D. 66.

(1) This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure

Chap. iii. 1, 2,
Transition^s to second prediction.

minds by way of remembrance: ⁽²⁾ that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of

III.

(1, 2) Just as the two halves of the first main portion of the Epistle are linked together by some personal remarks respecting his reason for writing this Epistle (chap. i. 12—15), so the two predictions which form the second main portion are connected by personal remarks respecting the purpose of both his Epistles.

(1) This second epistle, beloved, I now write.—Rather, *This now second epistle I write, beloved*; or, *This epistle, already a second one*—implying that no very long time has elapsed since his first letter, and that this one is addressed to pretty much the same circle of readers. There is no indication that the first two chapters are one letter, and that this is the beginning of another, as has been supposed. With this use of “now,” or “already,” comp. John xxi. 14.

Pure minds.—The word for “pure” means literally “separated”—according to one derivation, by being sifted; according to another, by being held up to the light. Hence it comes to mean “unsullied.” Here it probably means untainted by sensuality, or, possibly, deceit. In Phil. i. 10, the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament, it is translated “sincere.” (Comp. 1 Cor. v. 8; 2 Cor. i. 12; ii. 17.) The word for “mind”

means “the faculty of moral reflection and moral understanding,” which St. Peter, in his First Epistle (chap. i. 13), tells his readers to brace up and keep ready for constant use. These very two words are found together in a beautiful passage in Plato’s *Phaedo*, 66A.

By way of remembrance.—We have the same expression in chap. i. 13, and the translation in both cases should be the same—*stir up in putting you in remembrance*.

(2) By the holy prophets.—Appealed to before in chap. i. 19. (Comp. Jude, verse 17.) The coherence of the Epistle as a whole comes out strongly in this last chapter: verse 1 recalls chap. i. 12, 13; chap. iii. 17 recalls chap. i. 10—12; chap. iii. 18 recalls chap. i. 5—8. In this verse the Apostle commends the warnings of the Old Testament and the New Testament, as to the coming of Christ, to Christians throughout all ages.

The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord.—“Of us” is, beyond all doubt, a false reading; it should be “of you,” or “your.” The Greek is somewhat awkward, owing to the number of genitives, but the order of the words is conclusive as to the meaning—the *commandment of your Apostles* (or rather) *of the Lord and Saviour*. The commandment is at once a commandment of the Apostles and of the Lord. “The Apostles of the Lord” must not be

us the apostles of the Lord
and Saviour: ⁽³⁾ knowing

Chap. iii. 3, 4. this first, that
Second prediction. there shall
Scoffers shall arise come in the

last days scoffers, walking
after their own lusts,
⁽⁴⁾ and saying, Where is the
promise of Chap. iii. 3—9.
his coming? Answers to the
scoffers.

taken together, as in our version. The expression, "your Apostles," may be taken as a mark of genuineness rather than of the contrary. It is at least not improbable that a true Apostle, having once stated his credentials (chap. i. 1), would sink his own personality in the group of his colleagues from a feeling of humility and of delicacy towards those whom he was addressing, especially when they owed their Christianity mainly to other Apostles than himself. It is not improbable that a writer personating an Apostle would have insisted on his assumed personality and personal authority here.

What commandment is meant? Surely not the whole Christian law; but either the command to beware of false teachers (Matt. vii. 15; xxiv. 5, 11; Mark xiii. 22; Rom. xvi. 17; Eph. v. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 3), or, more probably, what is the main subject of this Epistle, to be ready for Christ's coming (Matt. xxiv. 36—39; Mark xiii. 35—37; Luke xii. 40; 1 Thess. v. 2—4).

SECOND PREDICTION: Scoffers shall throw doubt on Christ's return.

⁽³⁾ In the last days.—Comp. 1 Pet. i. 20; Heb. i. 2; and the parallel passage to this, Jude, verse 18. "Know this first, children, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts," is quoted in a homily

attributed, on doubtful authority, to Hippolytus. (See above on chap. ii. 1.)

Scoffers.—The best authorities add "*in scoffing*," intensifying the meaning by repetition (as in Eph. i. 3; Rev. xiv. 2; comp. Luke xxii. 15). There are other repetitions of this kind in the New Testament, which have been rendered by strengthening the verb in some other way (John iii. 29; Acts iv. 17; v. 28; Jas. v. 17).

⁽⁴⁾ Where is the promise?—Not meaning, of course, "In what passages of Scripture is any such promise to be found?"—but, "What has come of it? where is there any accomplishment of it?" (Comp. Ps. xlii. 3; lxxix. 10; Jer. xvii. 15; Mal. ii. 17.)

Of his coming.—"His" instead of "the Lord's" indicates not merely that only one Person could be meant, but also the irreverent way in which these scoffers spoke of Him.

Since the fathers fell asleep.—What fathers are meant? Four answers have been given to this question: (1) The ancestors of the human race; (2) the patriarchs and prophets; (3) the first generation of Christians; (4) each generation of men in relation to those following. Probably nothing more definite than our remote ancestors is intended. The expression "fell asleep" is used of St. Stephen's death in Acts vii. 60 (comp. Matt. xxvii. 52; 1 Cor. vii. 39, where the word is not literally translated;

for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the be-

ginning of the creation.
(5) For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by

xv. 6, 18, &c.). The thoroughly Christian term "cemetery" (= sleeping-place), in the sense of a place of repose for the *dead*, comes from the same Greek root.

There is a passage quoted by Clement of Rome (circ. A.D. 100) which seems at first sight to contain a reference to this verse: "Far be from us this Scripture where He saith, Wretched are the double-minded, who doubt in heart and say, *These things we heard in the times of our fathers also, but behold, we have grown old, and none of them has happened to us*" (*Epistle to the Corinthians*, xxiii.). But the remainder of this "Scripture," as quoted by Clement, is so utterly unlike the verse before us, that one suspects some other source. And this suspicion is confirmed when we find the same passage quoted in the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* (xi.) as "the prophetic word." (See on chap. i. 19 and on chap. ii. 9.) The differences between the two quotations are such that the pseudo-Clement appears to be quoting independently, and not merely borrowing from the true Clement. In neither case does close inspection encourage us to believe that our present verse is the source of the quotation. But the quotation by the true Clement is important as a complete refutation of the objection that "the fathers" means the first Christians, and consequently no such scoffing argument as this would be possible in the lifetime of St. Peter. This very

argument was not only in existence, but was condemned in a document which Clement before the close of the first century could quote as "Scripture." Comp. *Epistle of Polycarp*, chap. vii.: "Whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says there is neither resurrection nor judgment, he is the firstborn of Satan."

All things continue as they were.—Rather, *as they are*. The error has probably arisen from a desire to get rid of the slight difficulty of two dates being given: (1) from the death of "the fathers," and (2) from the beginning of the creation. The suggestion that "the fathers" are the first progenitors of the human race is another attempt to get rid of the difficulty by making the two dates virtually one and the same. But the second date is an after-thought, frequent in Thucydides, intensifying and strengthening the first. *Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they are*—nay, more, *since the beginning of the creation*.

This sceptical argument is used with increased force as each generation passes away. It will be at its strongest just before the fallacy of it is irrefragably exposed—on the eve of the day of judgment.

(5) **For this they willingly are ignorant of.**—Literally, *For this escapes their notice of their own will*. They voluntarily blind their eyes to this fact—at once an explanation of their argument, and first answer to it, drawn from the Mosaic account of the Creation.

the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing¹ out of the water and in

¹ Gr. *consisting*.

the water: ⁽⁶⁾ whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁽⁷⁾ but the

The earth standing out of the water and in the water.

—The margin is nearer the true meaning with “consisting” for “standing,” and the same word is translated “consist” in Col. i. 17. The notion is that of coherence, solidarity, and order, as distinct from chaos. “Out of [the] water” indicates the material out of which the earth was made; not, as our version leads us to suppose, that out of which the earth rose, like an island from the ocean. “In the water” is wrong, and again the error is probably derived from Geneva, though Tyndale has it also. We should render rather *by means of [the] water*. In both clauses the article should perhaps be omitted—*the earth consisting out of water and through water*. (Comp. Ps. xxiv. 2; cxxxvi. 6.) In the *Clementine Homilies* (XI. xxiv.) we have the idea of all things being made by water. In the Greek “by the word of God” comes last, not first; emphasis is obtained either way. “By the word of God;” not by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, not by spontaneous generation. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (I. Vis. I. iii. 4) we read, “Behold, the God of virtues (powers) . . . by His mighty word has fixed the heaven, and laid the foundation of the earth upon the waters.” (See above on ii. 1, 3, 13, 15, 20.) In an *Apology* of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, addressed to Antonius Cæsar about A.D. 170, there is a passage bearing a con-

siderable amount of resemblance to these verses (5—7).

⁽⁶⁾ **Whereby.**—The meaning of this is much disputed. The original literally signifies, *by means of which things*. But what things? The context allows various alternatives: (1) These facts about the Creation; (2) the heavens and the earth; (3) the water out of which, and the water by means of which, the world was made; (4) any or all of these together with the word of God. There is good reason for preferring the second of these. Both the heavens and the earth contributed to the Deluge; for then “all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Gen. vii. 11). The English “whereby” is as vague as the original.

The world that then was, . . . perished.—So that it is absurd to say that all things continue unchanged since the Creation. The world was so transformed by the Deluge that the world previous to that catastrophe perished, chaos for the moment returned, and a new world issued from the crisis. “The world that then was, perished,” is equivalent to, “He spared not the old world,” in chap. ii. 5.

⁽⁷⁾ **By the same word.**—Or, as some first-rate authorities read, *by His word*. The sense in either case is that the universe is preserved for judgment by the same power that created it. “His word” here does not mean any single utterance of God or passage of

heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁽⁸⁾ But, be-

loved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁽⁹⁾ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as

Scripture, such as Isa. lxvi. 15; Dan. vii. 9, 10; Mal. iv. 1. Just as "the world that then was" was destroyed by water, so the present world is being treasured up to be destroyed by fire. Comp. Rom. ii. 5. Christ Himself, in a discourse which St. Peter heard (Mark xiii. 3), had made the Flood a type of the Judgment (Matt. xxiv. 37—39). (See below on verse 10.) "Unto fire," or "for fire," should perhaps be taken with "kept in store" rather than with "reserved."

⁽⁸⁾ *Second Answer* to the sceptical argument: Time is the condition of man's thought and action, but not of God's. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways; what seems delay to us is none to Him.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing.—Although these scoffers are willingly ignorant of what refutes their error, do not you be ignorant of what will lead you to the truth.

One day is with the Lord as a thousand years.—This half of the saying is quite original, and has no equivalent in Ps. xc. 4. The second half is only partially parallel to "a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past." Consequently, we cannot be sure that the Apostle had this passage from the Psalms in his mind, though it is probable enough that he had. That God

can punish in one day the sins of a thousand years is a thought which is neither in the text nor in the context. What is insisted on is simply this—that distinctions of long and short time are nothing in the sight of God; delay is a purely human conception. Justin Martyr, about A.D. 145 (*Trypho*, lxxxi.), gives "the day of the Lord is as a thousand years" as a quotation, and in this form it is closer to 2 Pet. iii. 8 than to Ps. xc. 4. As another possible reference to our Epistle follows in the next chapter, it may be regarded as not improbable that Justin knew the Epistle. (See above, second Note on chap. ii. 1.) But the saying may have been a favourite one, especially with those who held Millennarian views. In the *Epistle of Barnabas* (xv. 4) we read, "For a day means with Him a thousand years, and He Himself witnesseth, saying, Behold, to-day shall be as a thousand years," where for "to-day" the *Codex Sinaiticus* reads "the day of the Lord." Irenæus has, "The day of the Lord is as a thousand years" twice—(V. xxiii. 2; xxviii. 3); Hippolytus has it once (*Comm. on Daniel*, Lagarde, p. 153); Methodius once (in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, cod. 235). In no case, however, is the context at all similar to the verses before us.

⁽⁹⁾ *Third Answer*—a practical one: Make good use of what to you seems to be delay.

some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But the

day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great

Chap. iii. 10. The certainty of Christ's coming the basis of this warning.

The Lord is not slack.—We are in doubt whether “the Lord” means Christ or God the Father. In verse 8 “the Lord” certainly means God ; and this is in favour of the same meaning here. On the other hand, “concerning His promise” naturally refers to Christ’s promise that He will return. The same doubt recurs with regard to verse 15 (see Note there). By “is not slack” is meant “does not delay beyond the time appointed.” There is no dilatoriness ; He waits, but is never slow, is never late.

Concerning his promise.—The Greek construction is peculiar, formed on the analogy of a comparative adjective—“is not slower than his promise.” (Comp. Rom. iii. 23.)

But is longsuffering.—(Comp. verse 15 and 1 Pet. iii. 20.) As St. Augustine puts it, God is *patiens quia aeternus*—longsuffering because He is eternal. He who is from everlasting to everlasting can afford to wait. (Comp. the *Shepherd*, Sim. VIII. xi. 1.)

To us-ward.—The true reading, beyond all doubt, is *towards you*. It is specially natural here that St. Peter should not include himself among those whom he addresses ; for he is writing mainly to Gentile Christians (chap. i. 1), and this longsuffering of God had been conspicuous in His dealings with the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 11—36.) (See second Note on 1 Pet. i. 12.)

⁽¹⁰⁾ The certainty and possible nearness of Christ’s coming is the basis of the preceding warning and of the exhortations which follow.

As a thief in the night.—Suddenly and without warning. The words are an echo of Matt. xxiv. 43, a saying which St. Peter certainly heard (Mark xiii. 3), or possibly of 1 Thess. v. 2, which may easily be included in the Epistles referred to below in verse 16. The words “in the night” are here wanting in authority.

The heavens shall pass away.—Again an apparent reminiscence of the discourse in Matt. xxiv. (where comp. verse 35)—the third such reminiscence in this chapter (see preceding Note, and on verse 7). This repeated reproduction of words and ideas from one of the most impressive of Christ’s discourses, which only St. Peter and three others seem to have heard, may fairly be added to the evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Epistle.

With a great noise.—Better, *with a rushing noise*. The expression occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but some such idea as that in Isa. xxxiv. 4, Rev. vi. 14, is probably indicated—not the roar of flames or the crash of ruins, but the parting and rolling up of the heavens. (Comp. Rev. xx. 11.)

The elements shall melt with fervent heat.—The meaning of “elements” here is much

noise, and the elements
shall melt with fervent

heat, the earth also and
the works that are there-

disputed. (See Notes on the word in Gal. iv. 3, 9.) The difficulty of supposing fire to be destroyed by fire seems to exclude the four elements being intended; moreover, the earth is mentioned separately. Hence, some take "the elements" to mean water and air, the two remaining elements; but this is not very satisfactory. More probably, the various forms of matter in the universe are intended, without any thought of indicating what they are precisely. But seeing that Justin Martyr calls the sun, moon, and stars "heavenly elements" (*Apol.* II. v., *Trypho*, xxiii.), and that in predictions of the last day frequent mention is made of "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars" (*Matt.* xxiv. 29; *Mark* xiii. 24; *Luke* xxi. 25; *Isa.* xiii. 10; xxiv. 23; *Joel* ii. 31, &c.), it is possible that the heavenly bodies are meant here, all the more so, as the mention of these "elements" immediately follows that of the heavens. Bengel (perhaps with more poetry than correctness) ingeniously connects this explanation with the radical signification of the word, viz., "letters of the alphabet," "for stars in the heaven are as letters on a scroll." (*Comp. Rev.* vi. 14.) "Shall melt" should rather be, as in the next two verses, *shall be dissolved*. Wicliff has "dissolved," Rheims "resolved." This dissolution is the opposite of the consistency spoken of in verse 5. In verse 12 "melt" is correct, and suits the heavenly bodies better than the four elements. (*Comp. The Second Epistle of Clement*, xvi. 3.)

The earth also and the works that are therein.—Equivalent to "the earth and the fulness thereof," "works" being used in a comprehensive sense for products both of nature and art. The moral work of each individual is not meant; consequently, a reference to 1 Cor. iii. 13 is misleading. The two passages have little in common, and nothing is gained by bringing in the difficulties of the other passage here. In this passage the Apostle is stating plainly and in detail what some of the prophets of the Old Testament had set forth in general and sometimes obscure language—that a judgment by fire is in store for the world (*Isa.* lxvi. 15, 16, 24; *Mal.* iii. 1—3; iv. 1).

Shall be burned up.—The question of readings here is one of known difficulty. One important MS. has "shall vanish away" (*James* iv. 14); two first-rate MSS. and other authorities have "shall be found." The later Syriac has "shall not be found," which is pretty nearly equivalent to "shall vanish away," and is sometimes given as exactly equivalent to it. "Shall be found," the reading most strongly attested, is summarily rejected by some editors as yielding no sense. The theory that it has grown out of the Latin for "shall be burned up"—*eurethesetai* out of *exurentur*—does not seem very probable. Nor is it true that it yields no sense. By placing a colon at "also," and making what follows a question, we obtain—*The elements shall be dissolved, the earth also: and shall the works that are*

in shall be burned up.

(11) *Seeing then that all* these things

Chap. iii. 11—18. Concluding exhortations.

shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy con-

¹ Or, *hasting the coming.*

versation and godliness,

(12) looking for and hasting¹

unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with

therein be found? Happily, nothing of importance turns on the reading; all the variations amount practically to the same thing—that the elements, the earth, and all that is in it, shall be destroyed.

(11) *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved.*—For “then” we ought probably to read “thus,” *seeing that all these things are thus to be dissolved.* The original is present in form, but rightly translated by the future, being the prophetic present, *i.e.*, the future prophetic—allegedly regarded as present.

What manner of persons.—Not so much a question as an exclamation. In any case, the sentence should run on to the end of verse 12. To put an interrogation at “to be” or at “godliness,” and make what follows an answer to the question, would be stiff and frigid, and very unlike the fervour of this Epistle.

Ought ye to be.—We might fairly translate, *ought ye to be found.* The Greek implies that the state is one that has continued for some time before the day comes.

In all holy conversation and godliness.—Literally, *in holy behaviours and godlinesses.* (See Notes on chap. i. 3 and chap. ii. 7.) The plurals indicate a variety of acts. They occur in this passage only.

(12) **Hasting unto.**—There is no “unto” in the Greek. The margin is probably right, *hasting the coming*—*i.e.*, hastening Christ’s coming by holy lives, by helping to make the Gospel known to all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14), so as to “accomplish the number of the elect,” and by praying “Thy kingdom come.” (Comp. 2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. xxii. 20.) The thought is singularly parallel to St. Peter’s speech in Solomon’s Porch (Acts iii. 19—21, where see Notes); and as the thought is striking and unusual—perhaps nowhere else in the New Testament distinctly—this coincidence may fairly be admitted as a note of genuineness.

The coming of the day of God.—A phrase which occurs here only. It is doubly remarkable: (1) “coming,” in the special sense indicated by the particular word used in the Greek, is elsewhere used of Christ Himself, not of the day; (2) “the day of God” is a very unusual expression.

Wherein.—Rather, *by reason of which*, either “the day” or “the coming” being meant.

Shall melt.—“Melt” is here correct, being quite a different word from that rendered “melt” in verse 10, which is the same as that here translated “be dissolved.” In the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* (chap. xvi.) we have a

fervent heat? ⁽¹³⁾ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Wherefore, be-

loved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And account *that* the longsuffer-

somewhat similar passage—"The day of judgment cometh even now as a burning oven (Mal. iv. 1), and [the powers] of the heavens shall melt, and all the earth as lead melting on the fire."

⁽¹³⁾ Nevertheless we, according to his promise.—"Nevertheless" is too strong, and the emphasis is on "new," not on "we." *But new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, we look for, according to His promise.* (Comp. Rev. xxi. 1.) On the repetition of "look for," three times in three verses, see above on chap. ii. 7. The promise of the new heavens and new earth is given in Isa. lxxv. 17; lxxvi. 22. There are two words for "new" in Greek; one looks forward, "young" as opposed to "aged;" the other looks back, "fresh" as opposed to "worn out." It is the latter word that is used here and in Rev. xxi. 1, 9. Both are used in Matt. ix. 17, but the distinction is not marked in our version—"They put new wine into fresh wine-skins."

Wherein dwelleth righteousness.—Comp. Isa. lxxv. 25; Rev. xxi. 27. Righteousness has its home there; is not a wanderer and changeful guest, as on earth, therefore by righteousness must ye make yourselves worthy of entering therein.

With this whole verse compare 1 Pet. i., where (verse 4) a similar

thought is expressed with equal beauty, and where (verse 13) a similar conclusion is drawn from it. (See next verse.)

⁽¹⁴⁾ Be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.—Rather, *Be found spotless and blameless in His sight.* "Be found of Him," i.e., "by Him" (comp. chap. ii. 19), cannot stand; the construction is parallel to "be found unto you" (2 Cor. xii. 20), i.e., "in your judgment," or "in your sight." The pair of epithets, "spotless and blameless," should be noticed as coinciding with 1 Pet. i. 19, and also as forming a marked contrast to the false teachers, who are called "spots and blemishes" (2 Pet. ii. 13). "In peace" cannot well refer to differences between Jewish and Gentile Christians, a subject quite foreign to this Epistle. It may possibly refer to the false teachers, and the discord caused by them; but more probably it has no special reference. It expresses at once the condition and the consequence of being "spotless and blameless." "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked."

⁽¹⁵⁾ The longsuffering of our Lord.—Again, as in verse 9, we are in doubt as to whether God the Father or the Lord Jesus is meant. In neither case is absolute certainty obtainable; but here the balance seems decidedly in favour of the latter meaning. In verse 8 "the

ing of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved

brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto

Lord" certainly means God, and not the Lord Jesus (comp. chap. ii. 9, 11). In verse 18 "our Lord" is expressly stated to be Jesus Christ. The two intermediate verses, 9 and 15, are open to dispute. The fact that "our" appears in this verse before "Lord," as in verse 18, inclines the balance here towards the meaning in verse 18. Moreover, had God been meant, it would have sufficed to say, "and account that *His* longsuffering is salvation." If this is correct, and "our Lord" means Jesus Christ, "then throughout this weighty passage the Lord Jesus is invested with the full attributes of Deity." Here, possibly, as also in chap. i. 1 (see Note), the expression points to the writer's entire belief in the unity of the two Persons. *Account the longsuffering of our Lord salvation*, instead of accounting it to be "slackness" (verse 9); make use of it for working out your own salvation in fear and trembling, instead of criticising it.

As our beloved brother Paul.—This may possibly mean something more than that St. Paul was a fellow-Christian and a personal friend—viz., that he was a fellow-worker and brother-evangelist. More than this it cannot well mean, though some interpret it "brother-Apostle." Tychicus is twice called "beloved brother" by St. Paul (Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7), and the addition of "our" here can make no such change of meaning. It is doubtful whether there is any allusion to the dispute between St. Peter and St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11), although an expres-

sion of marked affection would be quite in place as evidence that all such differences were now forgotten. In any case the familiarity and equality which the expression "our beloved brother Paul" implies should be noticed. It is in marked contrast to the way in which Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Clement of Alexandria speak of St. Paul, and in this way is a decided note of genuineness. A writer of the sub-Apostolic age would not easily be able to free himself from the feeling of the age in this respect. Clement of Rome (*Corinthians*, xlvii. 1), says, "Take up the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle." Ignatius (*Ephesians*, vii. 2) calls him "*Paul the sanctified, the martyred, worthily called blessed.*" Polycarp (see next Note) calls him "*the blessed and glorious Paul,*" or "*the blessed Paul.*" Clement of Alexandria commonly says simply "*the Apostle,*" but sometimes "*the divine Apostle,*" or "*the noble Apostle.*" An imitator in the second century would scarcely have attained to the freedom of "our beloved brother Paul."

According to the wisdom given unto him.—Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 10; Gal. ii. 9. Polycarp, in his *Epistle to the Philippians* (chap. iii. 2), says, "Neither I nor any one else like me can equal the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who . . . wrote letters to you, into which ye look diligently, &c. &c." This seems to show that St. Paul's letters had already become the common property of the churches.

Hath written unto you.—More literally, *wrote to you*. What

him hath written unto
you; ⁽¹⁶⁾ as also in all his

epistles, speaking in them
of these things; in which

Epistle or Epistles are here meant? Few points in this Epistle have been more debated. The following are some of the many answers that have been given to the question: (1) a lost Epistle; (2) Hebrews, because of chaps. ix. 26—28; x. 23—25, 37; (3) Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, because our Epistle is supposed to be addressed to the Christians of Asia Minor; (4) Ephesians only, for the reason just stated, and because Colossians and Galatians contain little or no mention of the day of judgment; also because of Eph. iv. 30, and the encyclical character of the Epistle; (5) 1 Corinthians, because of chap. i. 7—9; (6) Romans, because of chaps. ii. 4 and ix. 22 and 23; (7) 1 and 2 Thessalonians, because of 1 Thess. iv. 14—18; v. 1—11, 23, because 2 Pet. iii. 10 recalls 1 Thess. v. 2, also because “things hard to be understood” admirably describes much of 2 Thess. ii., which treats of the time of Christ’s coming, the very subject here under discussion.

Of these seven theories, (1) can neither be proved nor disproved; (3) and (4) lose much of their weight when we consider that the persons addressed in 2 Peter are nowhere defined, excepting that to some extent they are identical with those addressed in 1 Peter. Of the remaining four, (7) seems to be very probable, both on account of the large amount of coincidence, and also because of the early date of those Epistles, allowing an interval of fifteen years, in which the two Epistles might easily have become well known in other

churches. Still it is difficult to find a passage in them about the *longsuffering* of God, such as Rom. ii. 4; ix. 22, 23. And when we consider that Romans also appears to have been an Encyclical Letter, and was written not so very long after the Epistles to the Thessalonians; that in Rom. iii. 8 St. Paul himself tells us that he had been grossly misunderstood; that chap. ix. 3 might easily cause serious misunderstanding, and that Rom. vi. 16 seems to be recalled in 2 Pet. ii. 19—it will perhaps be thought that on the whole Romans best answers to the requirements of the context.

⁽¹⁶⁾ As also in all his epistles.—All those known to the writer. The expression does not necessarily imply that St. Paul was dead, and that his Epistles had been collected into one volume. That each Church made a collection of them as they became known to it, and that in the great centres they became known soon after they were written, are conjectures of great probability.

Speaking in them of these things—viz., of the return of Christ and of the destruction of the world. Some, however, understand the words as meaning the exhortations to holiness here given.

Some things hard to be understood.—Certainly the difficulties with which 2 Thess. ii. bristles are well described by this expression, and they relate to the very point in question—the time of Christ’s coming. Moreover, scoffers could easily turn them to account by arguing that “the man of sin”

are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and un-

stable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruc-

had not yet appeared, and that therefore there was no likelihood of the end of the world coming just yet. But in admitting that 1 Thess. ii. is among the passages alluded to here, we are not committed to the theory that 1 and 2 Thess. are alluded to in verse 15. Many refer these words to St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as wrested to mean "faith without works." So, again, Eph. ii. 5, 6, and Col. ii. 12 might be wrested to mean that "the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. ii. 18). (See Note on Rom. iii. 8 respecting perversion of his teaching.)

Unlearned and unstable.—The word for "unlearned" here is not the same as that translated "unlearned" in Acts iv. 13. (See Note there.) That signifies "without special study;" this means "without ordinary instruction." Ignorance naturally produces instability; those who have no clear principles of Christian doctrine easily fall victims to seductions of all kinds. (Comp. chap. ii. 14.)

Wrest.—Literally, *torture by means of the rack*; and hence "strain," "distort." That St. Paul's doctrine of Christian liberty, as opposed to the bondage of the Law, was seen by himself to be liable to great abuse, and had already begun to be abused, we learn from his own writings (1 Cor. vi. 12—20; Gal. v. 13—26; where see Notes. Comp. Rev. ii. 20).

The other scriptures.—The Old Testament cannot well be

meant. St. Peter would scarcely have placed the writings of a contemporary side by side with the Scriptures of the Old Testament (the canon of which had long since been closed) without some intimation of a grouping which at that time must have been novel, and probably was quite unknown. It is much more probable that Christian writings of some kind are intended, but we can only conjecture which, any of the canonical writings of the New Testament then in existence, and perhaps some that are not canonical. That an Apostle should speak of the writings of a brother-Apostle in the same terms as the books of the Old Testament—viz., as *Scripture*—need not surprise us, especially when we remember the large claims made by St. Paul for his own words (1 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 15; Eph. iii. 3—5. Comp. Acts xv. 28; Rev. xxii. 18, 19). In 1 Pet. i. 12, Evangelists are almost made superior to the Old Testament Prophets—a statement indicating a view which harmonises well both with 2 Pet. i. 15—19 and with the view set forth here; for in chap. i. 15 he assigns to this Epistle much the same purpose as in chap. i. 19 he assigns to the Old Testament Prophets. Moreover, we have seen how Clement of Rome uses the term "Scripture" of a passage which comes from some uncanonical book (see above on verse 4). See *Introduction*, I. c. §. 4.

Unto their own destruction.—The Greek is very emphatic

tion. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away

with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. ⁽¹⁸⁾ But grow in grace, and *in the*

as to its being "their own." (Comp. "Bring upon themselves swift destruction," chap. ii. 1.) It is their own doing—St. Paul and other writers of Scripture are not to blame; and it befits them—they will find the end they deserve. This passage gives no countenance to the Roman doctrine that all Scripture is hard to understand, and therefore not to be read by the people. All that is here said is that *some* Scripture is hard to understand, and that bad men make a bad use of the fact. The inference drawn from this by St. Peter is not, "Do not read Scripture," nor even, "Pass over what seems to be hard," but, "Be on your guard against being led astray by interpretations contrary to the spirit of the gospel."

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Know these things before.**—Seeing that I have forewarned you of the certain appearance, conduct, and success of these false teachers and scoffers, "Forewarned, forearmed."

Being led away with.—The Greek word occurs only thrice in the New Testament—here, Rom. xii. 16, and Gal. ii. 13. In Rom. xii. 16 its meaning is a good deal different (see Note there). In Gal. ii. 13 it has the same meaning as here; and, strangely enough, it is of Barnabas being "carried away with" the dissimulation of Peter and his associates.

The error of the wicked.—Better, *the error of the lawless* (chap. ii. 7). but not "the seduc-

tion" or "deceit of the lawless," as some would render it. It is the same word as occurs at the end of chap. ii. 18, and it implies wandering from the path, but not leading others astray. The context, not the word itself, shows that there was seduction. "The lawless" are the false teachers and scoffers.

Fall from your own steadfastness.—Referring back to chap. i. 10—12, just as verse 18 refers back to chap. i. 5—8; showing how complete is the coherence between the beginning and ending of the Epistle. (Comp. Gal. v. 4.) This "steadfastness" will be based on belief in Christ's coming, and on the hope of entering into His kingdom, and thus will be in marked contrast to the unbelief of the "unstable" in verse 16. The word for "steadfastness" occurs nowhere else.

The entire absence of directions—which St. Jude gives rather elaborately—as to how these evil men and their victims are to be treated by sound Christians, is in favour of the priority of this Epistle. When evil men begin to arise, the first impulse is to avoid them and their ways, and to this course St. Peter exhorts his readers. When such men have established themselves and gained proselytes, people begin to consider how to deal with the seducers and to win back the seduced, and to these points St. Jude directs his readers.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our**

knowledge of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. To

Lord.—Or, *But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord*—i.e., it may mean “the grace of our Lord” as well as “the knowledge of our Lord.” But the Greek is not decisive on this point; and the rendering in our version avoids the awkwardness of coupling a subjective and objective genitive together by “and.” For “the grace of our Lord” must mean the grace of which He is the *giver*; while “the knowledge of our Lord” must mean the knowledge of which He is the *object*. Rom. xv. 4 and 1 Pet. i. 2 are not instances of such coupling.

The Apostle ends, as he began, by exhorting them to that sound knowledge which he sets forth as the sure basis of all Christian activity, whether the knowledge be full and mature, as in chap. i. 2, 3, 8; ii. 20, or to be acquired and increased, as in chap. i. 5 and here.

DOXOLOGY.—The Epistle comes to a most abrupt conclusion, without any personal remarks or greetings. This is so unlike the First Epistle, so unusual in Apostolic letters generally, that an imitator, and so accomplished an imitator as the writer of this Epistle must have been, would scarcely have omitted so usual and natural an addition. The addition would have been doubly natural here, for the personator (if the writer of the Epistle be such) is personating St. Peter near the end of his life, writing to congregations whom he is not likely either to see or address again. Surely the circumstances would have seemed to him

to demand some words of personal greeting and tender farewell; and Acts xx. 18—35; 2 Tim. iv. 6—18, would have supplied him with models. But nothing of the kind is inserted. Assume that St. Peter himself is the writer, and then we can understand how he came to disappoint such natural expectations. His heart is too full of the fatal dangers which threaten the whole Christian community to think of himself and his personal friends. As to his death, which cannot be far off, he knows that it will come swiftly at the last, and his chief fear is lest it should come upon him before he has left on record these words of warning and exhortation (chap. i. 13—15). Therefore, at the opening he hurries to his subject at once, and presses on, without pause or break, until it is exhausted; and now that he has unburdened his heart he cares to say no more, but ends at once with a tribute of praise to the Master that bought him.

To him be glory.—Better, *to Him be the glory*—all that His creatures have to render. Whatever may be our view of verse 15, there can be no doubt that in this doxology homage is paid to Jesus Christ as true God. It is, perhaps, the earliest example of that “hymn to Christ as God” which Pliny tells Trajan the Christians were accustomed to sing before day-break.

And for ever.—Literally, *and to the day of eternity*. The phrase is used by the LXX. in Ecclus. xviii. 10, but is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It

him *be* glory both now and | | for ever. Amen. Doxology.

means that day which marks the end of time and the beginning of eternity, the day which not only begins, but is, eternity. The expression is quite in harmony with the general drift of the chapter. "Heaven and earth shall pass

away, but" "the day of God" "shall not pass away."

Amen.—Comp. Jude, verse 25. Here the word is of rather doubtful authority. Being used in doxologies, it would be very likely to be added by a copyist.

THE EPISTLES OF
JOHN.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>I. WHO WAS THE WRITER?</p> <p>II. WHO WERE THE READERS?</p> <p>III. WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CHURCHES?</p> <p>IV. IS THE WRITING AN EPISTLE?</p> | <p>V. WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?</p> <p>VI. WHERE WAS IT WRITTEN?</p> <p>VII. WHAT IS ITS SCOPE?</p> <p>VIII. NOTES ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES.</p> <p>IX. LITERATURE.</p> |
|---|---|

I. Who was the Writer?—Three Epistles come before us in the New Testament bearing a very strong family likeness to each other and to the Fourth Gospel. They carry no superscription in their text, but “the elder,” or “the old man.” Whose are they? The manuscripts from which they are derived have always said “John’s,” and in some is added “the Apostle.”

We will here consider the First. The Second and Third will be treated separately. The evidence for the First is as strong as anything could be. It was accepted as the Apostle’s by the whole Church. Eusebius, the historian (born about A.D. 270), places it among the writings “universally admitted (*homologoumena*)”; and Jerome states that it received the sanction of all members of the Church. The only exceptions were such sects of heretics as would be likely to repudiate it as not harmonising with their theological errors; the Alogi, or “Unreasonables,” an obscure and rather doubtful sect in the second century, who rejected St. John’s Gospel and the Revelation, and therefore, probably, these

three Epistles; and Marcion, in the same century, who chose such parts of the New Testament as suited him best, and altered them at pleasure.

The evidence of quotation and reference begins early. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, became a Christian A.D. 83. In the epistle which he wrote to the Philippians, occur these words: “For every one that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist.” The likeness to 1 John iv. 2, 3, is marked; and it is far more probable that a loosely written letter, such as his, should embody a well-known saying of so sententious and closely-worded a treatise as the First Epistle of John than the other way.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, flourished in the first half of the second century. Irenæus, who was born about the end of the first century, says that he was a hearer of St. John. This is contradicted by Eusebius on the evidence of Papias’ own writings (*H.E.* III. 39, 1, 2); but he wrote a work called, *An Explanation of the Oracles of the Lord*, in which he bore witness to

I. JOHN.

the authenticity of Christian doctrine. The account of his work is derived from Eusebius, the historian, who says that "he used testimonials from the First Epistle of John." By balancing the name of St. John in this sentence with that of St. Peter, Eusebius evidently understood the Apostle.

About A.D. 100 was born Justin Martyr. In his time was written the anonymous epistle to Diognetus. Six of its chapters contain indisputable reminiscences of the First Epistle. The epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons was written in A.D. 177. It quotes 1 John iii. 16. Carpocrates, the Gnostic, lived at Alexandria at the beginning of the second century. He tried to pervert 1 John v. 19, "The whole world lieth in the evil one." Irenæus cites three passages from the First Epistle, mentioning its author; and Eusebius mentions this piece of evidence in exactly the same manner as that from Papias. Clement of Alexandria was born about A.D. 150. Like Irenæus, he quotes passages from the First Epistle, naming the author. So Tertullian, born about the same time, Origen, and the succeeding Fathers. About A.D. 170, a Canon of the New Testament was drawn up by some teacher for the use of catechumens. This is now known by the name of Muratori, who discovered and printed it A.D. 1740. (See Tregelles' *Canon Muratorianus*, pages 1, 81—89 : Oxford, 1867.) "What wonder," it says, "that St. John makes so many references to the Fourth Gospel in his Epistles, saying of himself, 'that which we have seen with our eyes, and have heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, that have we

written ? for thus he professes himself not only the eye-witness, but also the hearer and the writer of all the wonders of the Lord in order." And after cataloguing St. Paul's Epistles, it continues : "The Epistle of Jude, and the two which bear the name of John as a title, are considered General." The writer evidently means the Second and Third Epistles, which might not have been considered general from their shortness and slightness. The Peschito, or Syrian version, of about the same date, gives the same evidence as the Muratorian Canon. We have thus a consentient voice from the churches of East and West, of Syria, of Alexandria, of Africa, and of Gaul.

So strong, so clear, is the external proof. On the internal nothing can be better than the words of Ewald. "As in the Gospel, we see here the author retire to the background, unwilling to speak of himself, and still less to support anything by the weight of his name and reputation, although the reader here meets him, not as the calm narrator, but as an epistolary writer, as exhorter and teacher, as an Apostle, and, moreover, as the only surviving Apostle. It is the same delicacy and diffidence, the same lofty calmness and composure, and especially the same truly Christian modesty, that cause him to retire to the background as an Apostle, and to say altogether so little of himself. He only desires to counsel and warn, and to remind his readers of the sublime truth they have once acquired; and the higher he stands the less he is disposed to humble 'the brethren' by his great authority and directions. But he knew who he was, and every word tells plainly that he only

INTRODUCTION.

could thus speak, counsel, and warn. The unique consciousness which an Apostle as he grew older could carry within himself, and which he, once the favourite disciple, had in a peculiar measure; the calm superiority, clearness, and decision in thinking on Christian subjects; the rich experience of a long life, steeled in the victorious struggle with every unchristian element; and a glowing language lying concealed under this calmness, which makes us feel intuitively that it does not in vain commend to us love as the highest attainment of Christianity — all this coincides so remarkably in this Epistle, that every reader of that period, probably without any further intimation, might readily determine who he was. But where the connection required it the author intimates with manifest plainness that he stood in the nearest possible relations to Jesus (chaps. i. 1—3; iv. 16; v. 3—6), precisely as he is wont to express himself in similar circumstances in the Gospel; and all this is so artless and simple, so entirely without the faintest trace of imitation in either case, that nobody can fail to perceive that the selfsame author and Apostle must have composed both writings" (Ewald, *Die Johann. Schriften*, i. 431).

No less than thirty-five passages of the Fourth Gospel are common to the First Epistle. These expressions occur in twenty-three different places, and are used in a way of which only the author of the same two treatises could be capable. Considerably more than half of the parallel places in the Gospel belong to the farewell discourses of John xii.—xvii. There the tender, loving, receptive, truth-

ful, retentive mind of the bosom-friend had been particularly necessary; at that great crisis it had been, through the Spirit of God, particularly strong; and the more faithfully St. John had listened to his Master and reproduced Him, the deeper the impression was which the words made on his own mind, and the more likely he was to dwell on them in another work instead of on his own thoughts and words. The style may be his own both in Gospels and Epistles, modified by that of our Lord; the thoughts are the thoughts of Jesus. (See *Excursus D* to St. John's Gospel.) An examination of the following parallels will illustrate this:

First Epistle of John.	Gospel of John.
Chap. i. 1, 2.	Chap. i. 1, 2, 14.
" i. 4.	xv. 11.
" i. 10.	xvi. 24.
" ii. 1, 2.	v. 38.
" ii. 4—6.	xiv. 16.
" ii. 8.	xi. 51, 52.
" ii. 11.	xiii. 15, 34, 35.
" ii. 23.	xiv. 21—24.
" ii. 27.	xv. 10.
" iii. 1.	xiii. 34.
" iii. 8.	xii. 35.
" iii. 10.	xv. 23, 24.
" iii. 13—15.	v. 24.
" iii. 16.	xiv. 26.
" iii. 22.	xvii. 25.
" iv. 5, 6.	viii. 44.
" iv. 9.	viii. 47.
" iv. 16.	v. 24, 38.
" v. 3, 4.	xv. 18, 19.
" v. 9.	xv. 12, 13.
" v. 12.	ix. 31.
" v. 13.	xvi. 23.
" v. 14.	iii. 31.
	xv. 19.
	viii. 47.
	iii. 36.
	vi. 69.
	xiv. 15.
	xvi. 33.
	v. 36.
	iii. 56.
	xiv. 5.
	xx. 31.
	xiv. 13, 14.
	xvi. 23.

I. JOHN.

The proof that the Fourth Gospel was the work of St. John is given in the *Introduction* to that Gospel; in a former volume. On internal grounds alone, without the strong external evidence already sketched, an unbiassed mind would find it very difficult to believe that the First Epistle (and the Second and Third also) are not by the same author. Even the style and construction have an identity which could not easily be spurious or accidental. This is seen in the habit of thinking in periods the limbs of which are parallel and co-ordinate instead of progressive: the juncture of these by "and" instead of by particles, expressing consequence or movement: the peculiar use of four special particles: the general Aramaic framework of the diction: and the constant reappearance of special words and phrases. The identity of ideas in both writings is of the same character; they bear no sign of imitation, but are the free production of the same spirit. Light, life, darkness, truth, the lie, propitiation, doing righteousness, doing sin, doing lawlessness, life and death, loving and hating, love of the Father and love of the world, children of God and children of the devil, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error: all these notions underlie the thought of both Gospel and Epistle. The writer of each, too, has the same characteristics: love of the background for himself; absorbing devotion to his Lord; faithful receptiveness and faculty for sympathetic reproduction of His thoughts and spirit; pure unruffled, unfaltering movement among the very inmost facts of life and being; intense unhesitating indignation (like thunder from a clear sky) for wilful de-

prayers of spiritual truth; and the absolute tranquillity of that certainty which comes from long conviction and demonstrable experience. So, again, the particular dogmatic notes of each are the same: the Spirit already marking off the true from false believers, and so preparing the way for the final judgment; the manifestation of the sons of God already by the presence of the Father and the Son in the Spirit; the actual present beginning of everlasting life, and the safety from future judgment; the present existence of the last hour; Christ the actual Paraclete, the Divine Spirit being another. It would, indeed, be difficult to find a more structural and penetrating identity between the works of any author whatever than there is between the Gospel and the First Epistle.

It was Scaliger (1484—1558) who first announced "the three Epistles of John are not by the Apostle of that name." The tradition mentioned by Eusebius that there was living at Ephesus at the same time as St. John a presbyter of the same name, to whom great weight was attributed because he was a hearer of our Lord, seems to have given rise to the notion that "the elder" of the three Epistles was this traditional person. Those who take this view are guilty of the fallacy that if this man existed he must have had all the characteristics of the Apostle because he had his name and was contemporary. It is far more probable that the beginning of the three Epistles gave rise among the ignorant to the tradition.

In modern times, S. G. Lange was the first who questioned the Epistle on internal grounds. His

INTRODUCTION.

argument rests on the assumption that it is destitute of all characteristic individuality and personality; that the affinity of the Epistle to the Gospel is an imitation; that the Epistle exhibits marks of senile decay; and that if it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem mention must have been made of it in chap. ii. 18. Few sound critics will think these assumptions worth refutation. The next opponent, Bretschneider, lived to recant his doubts. The unreasonableness of Claudius, Horst, and Paulus, is even more arbitrary, imaginative, and groundless than that of Lange.

The Tübingen school have a preconception of their own to support. As, according to them, there can be no miracle, so there can be no direct revelation; the beginning of Christianity must have been the natural consciousness of an individual, such as Jesus of Nazareth, developing gradually through a much longer period than the accepted Christian history; they hold that Christ only slightly modified Judaism; that in the hands of St. Peter and St. John in the Apocalypse, His teaching took an Ebionite form, in the hands of St. Paul was adapted to the Gentile world at large; thence arose contentions, in reconciliation of which the greater part of the writings of the New Testament were composed, as party-writings without strict historical value. The Epistle is therefore treated by different members of the school as it will best suit their special theory. Kœstlin and Georgii think the author of the Gospel the same as of the Epistle; Zeller supposes it possible that they may be by different hands. Baur pronounces the Epistle a weak imitation of the Gospel; Hilgen-

feld a splendid product of it. Thus they contradict each other. The main arguments of Baur are five, and may be given as a specimen:— (1) Studious anxiety of the writer of the Epistle in his preface to be considered the same as the author of the Gospel; (2) vain attempt at drawing a distinction between divine and human testimony; (3) the eschatology of the Epistle more material than that of the Gospel; (4) the ideas of propitiation and Christ the interceding Paraclete more like the Epistle to the Hebrews than the Gospel; (5) the teaching wholly Montanistic, because it describes Christians as holy and sinless, mentions the anointing, and draws a distinction between venial and mortal sins. Of these it may be shortly said (1) that an imitation would have been more skilful, and that the intense consciousness of the eye-witness would necessarily produce the same line of thought when St. John was prefacing his moral treatise as when he was writing his history; (2) that the distinction runs throughout the Gospel; (3) to a candid reader the difference is impossible to discover; (4) no expression could be more sacrificial than “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;” (5) St. John is describing the ideal, not a class: the anointing is most certainly not that in baptism, mentioned for the first time by Tertullian, but that of “pouring out the Spirit:” and there is no reference whatever to the six or seven deadly sins of Tertullian, while there is a very distinct similarity between the idea of the sin unto death and the sin against the Holy Ghost of the Gospels. Baur, in fact, as Düsterdieck says,

has taken the Gnostic and Montanistic caricatures of the Apostolical teaching as if they were its type and origin.

The Epistle, then, has abundant historical evidence; the internal evidence that it is by the same hand as the Fourth Gospel is particularly strong; and the attacks of hostile critics are peculiarly arbitrary and unfounded.

II. Who were the Readers?

—There is in St. Augustine's works—and he often quotes this Epistle—a solitary citation of it as written to the Parthians. Whether this was his own opinion, a mere current traditional title, or a clerical error, the designation seems to have arisen from the fact mentioned by Clement of Alexandria that the Second Epistle was sometimes called "that to the virgins" (the word in the Greek for "virgin" being *parthenos*). This title evidently became misunderstood, and may have been applied to the First Epistle in error. One critic has discovered in "that which ye heard from the beginning" a proof that the readers were the inhabitants of Judæa; another, identifying St. John's correspondent Caius with St. Paul's host at Corinth (it was one of the commonest of all classical names), fancies that they must have been Corinthians; but it was evidently written to no church in particular: probably to a circle of churches in immediate connection with St. John, such as the seven addressed in the Revelation. The warning against idolatry may not unreasonably suggest Gentile Christians, and the contrast of the knowledge of the true God in Jesus Christ, implying eternal life, with the dazzling speculations

of innovating teachers, harmonises with the historical notice that St. John resided at Ephesus.

III. What were the Circumstances of the Churches?

—(1) There is no allusion to persecutions. The hatred of the world, the victory over the wicked one, the victory over the world, suggest spiritual conflict rather than hostile attacks.

(2) The internal indications point rather to disunion, want of brotherly love, want of steadfastness in the fellowship of the Father and the Son, the seductions of worldliness, the snares of false brethren, the evils of a time of peace, when persecution no longer braces the sinews of faith, and warning is needed rather than consolation; or when perversion has lost the moral shock of novelty, and Christian loyalty the fire of its indignation; a time full of evidence of continued spiritual vitality in old and young, but also when a recognised leader of a church can be so ambitious as to reject the authority of the last of the Apostles, and when heathen speculation rather than Jewish prejudice is beginning to corrupt Christian faith.

(3) The particular heretics combated had a Docetic tendency, not yet fully developed. Their theory was that the Son of God was a phantom, united for a time with the man Jesus. St. John's contemporary, Cerinthus, already noticed in the *Introduction* to his Gospel, held that Jesus was the son of Joseph, to whom the Logos was united from His baptism to His crucifixion. The stress laid on the true knowledge as growth in understanding what had been re-

INTRODUCTION.

vealed from the beginning, points also to the beginning of Gnosticism, the system which exalted speculation into religion, buried Christianity under a heterogeneous philosophy, and substituted intellectual athletics for faith working by love.

(4) The only division of Christians recognised is that into mature and young. All alike receive the unction of the Holy Ghost. John himself joins in the confession of sin. He lays on all the duty of trying the spirits. He makes all alike responsible directly to the Lord.

IV. Is the Writing an Epistle? — As an Encyclical Letter, it would have no special dedication nor salutations; the Epistle to the Hebrews is similarly without the one, that of St. James without the other. "I write" occurs seven times, "I have written" six, "you" thirty-six, "little children" ten, "beloved" six, "fathers" and "young men" twice each, "brethren" once. The introduction is an amplification of the ordinary epistolary address, founded on a reminiscence of the more abstract introduction to the Gospel. Bacon says: "An Epistle has more natural feeling than a treatise; more ripe development than momentary conversation." Düsterdieck says: "The whole writing rests as thoroughly on a living personal relation between the author and his readers, the application of the written exhortation is so absolutely personal, that this ground is enough to make us consider the writing as a genuine Epistle. This epistolary character belongs, moreover, to the whole keeping and character of the short writing. With all logical order

there reigns in it that easy naturalness and unconstraint of statement which suits the immediate interest and hortatory tendency of an Epistle; while the strict, progressive, dialectical development, peculiar to a treatise or a homily, is held back." It may be described, then, as a circular letter of St. John to the churches connected with his ministry, embodying a succinct statement of his principal views of Christian doctrine. There is no good reason for calling it either with one critic, the "polemical," or, with another, the "practical" part of the Gospel; or "a homiletical essay, the readers being present;" or "a summary," or "a companion letter of the Gospel."

V. When was it written?—

(1) As it contains no reference to persecutions, it is less likely to have been written in the time of Trajan (A.D. 98—117); probably before the end of the reign of Domitian, A.D. 96; after the reign of Nero and the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. Thus we get the period between A.D. 70 and 96. A date near 70 is less likely, because the breaking up of the Jewish world would have made some reference of the kind probable. "The last hour" is a note of spiritual, not material time.

(2) Jewish opposition no longer troubles the apostolic horizon.

(3) The life of individual churches apart from Jerusalem seems by this time the natural order of the Christian world.

(4) The heresies are the seeds of Docetism and Gnosticism: this points to the end of the first century.

(5) St. John is not mentioned in the Acts after the Jerusalem Council

I. JOHN.

of A.D. 51. But he does not seem to have been at Ephesus when St. Paul took leave of the elders in A.D. 60. (See *Introduction to the Gospel*.) If St. Paul died in A.D. 64, St. John can hardly have begun working at Ephesus till then. The tone of the Epistle implies a long and ripe pastoral intimacy. St. John was banished to Patmos before the end of the reign of Domitian, A.D. 96. He died after A.D. 100.

(6) It must always be a matter of opinion whether the Gospel or Epistle was written first. It may be that a comparison of John xx. 31, "These things are written that ye might believe," with 1 John v. 13, "These things have I written unto you that believe," indicates an earlier and more elementary object for the Gospel; but it cannot be pressed. It is certainly likely that the doctrinal chords struck in the Narrative should afterwards receive their fuller variations in the Exhortation. It may even be that some of the churches or their members, aroused by these solemn notes, asked St. John for a doctrinal writing.

(7) On the whole, there is no improbability in putting the date about A.D. 90.

VI. Where was it written?

—On such a point as this we are left to groundless conjecture, which is useless. An old tradition mentions Ephesus.

VII. What is its Scope?—

That the joy which Christians already had might not be dimmed by the world or by error, but might be crowned with completeness even in this life (1 John i. 4), and that they might realise the assurance of

the actual beginning of eternal life within them.

For this purpose God is held up as Light and Love, both through Jesus Christ. By that exercise of their will, which would make them remain in Christ as they knew Him, both by hearing and by their consciences, they would enjoy the serene dignity of companionship with the Almighty Father and His Son, and so secure these two grand objects.

Christians, looked at in the ideal, cannot be wilful sinners; but when betrayed into sin, they may recover through confession and reconciliation. The proof of the Christian life must be sought in obedience to the will of God, showing itself specially in true brotherly love. The chief dangers are the world and the depravation of Christian doctrine.

The light of God is shown in the absolute distinctness from Him of everything that is evil.

The love of God is shown in that sonship of Christians which is manifested by personal righteousness. Its correlative in us is love to God, shown in pure love for one another. The purity of love is measured by the purity of faith. And that faith is irrefragably grounded in the witness of the Old Testament through the Father, culminating in the inauguration of baptism; in the witness of the New Testament through the Son, culminating in the blood of Calvary; and in the witness of the Spirit speaking through our own consciences.

Christians cannot be reminded too often that their religious life is a matter of positive, demonstrable, realised facts, to be completed by earnest continual progress. They

INTRODUCTION.

are already in the Father and in the Son; they have eternal life begun within them; they have passed from death unto life; they have the witness of the Spirit. If they are in doubt, they can prove the truth of their life by obedience to God and love to the human family. For those in sin or error they can pray. The sight of the world and the knowledge of the Redeemer make it finally most important that they should hold to the faith in the utmost simplicity, and avoid all substitution of shadow for substance.

St. Paul writes now in a storm of argument, then in a humble strain of self-forgetful, self-abasing expostulation and entreaty; now eloquently on high abstract truths, now in exquisite descriptions, then about the homeliest and simplest duties. St. John moves in a calm sphere of certainty among the very highest, grandest, and largest of Christian truths, raising the general outlines of human life into the same atmosphere till they are illuminated and penetrated by the clear rays of Light and Love. All is simple, broad clear, calm, sure. He writes at once with the most commanding authority, and the most loving tenderness; the profoundest wisdom, and the most touching simplicity; the most searching knowledge of the human heart and its difficulties and failures, and the most elevating and bracing courage and confidence; the gentlest affection, and the most pitiless and sternest condemnation of wilful departure from truth in practice or opinion.

It is noticeable that in a treatise on the very innermost secrets of religious life, to all Christian souls are attributed the same duties and

privileges, and no mention is made of ministerial authority or responsibility; and that, though fellowship with the Father and the Son and the witness of the water and the blood are both brought into prominence, no allusion is made to sacraments.

VIII. Notes on Difficult Passages.

(1) *Propitiation.*

"He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 2).

"Sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).

The same form is used in Luke xviii. 13: "God be merciful (*be made propitious*) to me a sinner;" and in Heb. ii. 17: "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

In classical Greek the verbal form means "to make a person favourable."

From these facts it is clear that Christ is regarded as making God favourable to us. The word "reconciliation" introduces another idea, and should be kept for another Greek word, which occurs in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20. Although God is kind to the unthankful and the evil, yet for the sake of eternal Order and Righteousness He is represented to us as unable to pass over rebellion without punishment, as a warning and a security as well as a discipline. In this sense He could not look favourably on the world until His Son had bought it back by becoming sin for us. Thus He is the sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the whole world, which enables the Father, whose name is Love, to show the full scope of His favour. Divine love then can have

I. JOHN.

its perfect operation in reconciling man, or bringing him back. Expiation appeases that wrath, without which God would not be just; Reconciliation breaks down the enmity of man in his state of sin.

(2) *Brotherly love.*

The unflinching truthfulness and courage of St. John are nowhere more remarkable than in the pertinacity with which, amongst the perversions of human affection which are the blot of all societies, and were especially flagrant in the ancient world, he urges his friends to brotherly love. Love is the fulfilling of the law, the proof of union with God, the sign of having passed from death unto life, the great commandment of Christ, the outcome of birth from God, the witness of God's presence, the perfection and crown of our love to Him: the absence of it is the mark of spiritual death. It is that desire for the good of others, temporal and eternal, without which self-denial and self-sacrifice are but barren pride. Like St. Paul, it knows no man after the flesh—that is, for mere fancy, pleasure, or advantage—but is the instant recognition of merit and of God's good gifts wherever they may present themselves. Founded on faith and measured by it, it is absolutely pure and unselfish; it would lay down life itself for the good of others. And because it is that attitude of the human mind towards its fellows which is the reflex of God's mind towards us, it embraces and implies all human virtues.

(3) *The last hour* (chap. ii. 18).

This phraseology occurs first in Gen. xlix. 1, "That I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days;" where it means "the

sequel of days," "far-off times." So Num. xxiv. 14, "What this people shall do to thy people in the latter days;" Deut. iv. 30, "When all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days;" and Deut. xxxi. 29, "Evil will befall you in the latter days."

In Isa. ii. 2, it has begun to mean the new age of the world; a vague indefinite time, during which, or before which, Messiah's kingdom would be established. "It shall come to pass that in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established." So Micah iv. 1.

In Matt. xii. 32, our Lord distinguishes between this world (or rather, *age*) and the world to come. So "this time" is contrasted with "the world to come" in Mark x. 30 and Luke xviii. 30. In our Lord's usage, then, the beginning of the kingdom of Messiah belonged to the present age, and the coming age would not be till the completion of that kingdom. So the day of resurrection and final judgment, the beginning, that is, of the coming age, is "the last day" of the present (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; xi. 24; xii. 48).

St. Paul also speaks of the present age and the coming, the sufferings of the present time and the glory that shall be, and of things present and things to come (Rom. viii. 38). In Tit. ii. 12, 13, those who live "in this present world" are "looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour." He says that "in the last days" before that final period there "shall come perilous times" (2 Tim. iii. 1); and that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith (1 Tim. iv. 1). Although actually in this present

INTRODUCTION.

age, yet, according to St. Paul, Christians have more or less entered on the coming age proportionally to their degrees of progress. So the present age is regarded as tainted with sin and alienated from God (Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8; iii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Gal. i. 4; Eph. ii. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 10). Since the first advent of Christ, he regarded the present age as beginning to draw to its close; "our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

St. Peter identified his age with the "last days" of the prophets (Acts ii. 17), and considers the date of the first advent as "in these last times" (1 Pet. i. 20). But as, a few verses before (verse 5), he speaks of "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"; and again (2 Pet. iii. 3), "There shall come in the last days scoffers" (comp. Jude, verse 18), he evidently looked to a still more definite close of the already closing age.

St. James, too, looked forward to such a period: "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days" (Jas. v. 3). The Epistle to the Hebrews, like the first usage in St. Peter, treats the existing times as "these last days" (Heb. i. 1, 2); "now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). As well as this, it looks forward to the future age of which Christians already, in varying degrees, partake: "Have tasted the powers of the world to come" (Heb. vi. 5); "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come" (Heb. ix. 11). This tasting is only a beginning, not an actuality, till the second coming (Heb. xiii. 14).

St. John, then, having, like the other Apostles, the notion that the first age was drawing to its close, and that the latter days were already upon the earth, and believing—or, at the very least, firmly hoping—that the second advent was not far off, did not hesitate, especially in view of Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, to speak of the time of his old age as "the last hour." Of the date of the second coming even the Son was to be ignorant; but at any rate, since the death of the last of the Apostles, and the closing of the Canon, there had been no change in the Christian dispensation; it has been a constant repetition of repentance, forgiveness, watching.

(4) *Antichrist.*

"As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18).

"He is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22).

"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already it is in the world" (1 John iv. 3).

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist" (2 John, verse 7).

Our Lord foretold false Christs and false prophets, who "shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 11, 24; Mark xiii. 22, 23).

St. Paul spoke of the growth of the antichristian "lie," especially in the cities of Asia Minor. "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing

I. JOHN.

the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 29, 30; and 2 Tim. iii. 1—9). These would be but anticipations of that concentrated force of opposition for which St. Paul looked immediately before the second coming. "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God . . . Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. ii. 3—10).

St. John meant by the antichrists what St. Paul meant by the grievous wolves; the individual manifestations of "the spirit of antichrist," which St. Paul describes as "he whose coming is in them that perish." There is a difference, however, in the application of the idea, for the opposer in St. Paul's view is rather from without, St. John's principle of evil rather from within. Just as St. John noticed the same tendencies showing themselves in the same way in different individuals, and called them spirits, so in looking forward to a more formidable and final apostasy, he calls it "the spirit of antichrist," which has already declared itself in

so many personal antichrists. St. Paul's "man of sin" must be of the same spiritual character, for no human being could ever be powerful and dangerous enough to answer the description.

(5) *The three witnesses* (1 John v. 7, 8).

The authority for the words, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three who bear witness in the earth," is a copy made in the sixteenth century, of Codex 173, which dates from the eleventh.

The words are wanting in all the Greek Codices, including the Codex Sinaiticus, and in all the ancient versions, including the Latin, as late as the eighth century. Since then they are found in three variations. Had they been known they must have been quoted in the controversies about the Trinity; but they are not cited by any Greek or any of the older Latin Fathers. A quotation from Tertullian (*adv. Prax.* 25) and a parallel quotation from Cyprian (*Ep. ad Jub.*), where each is establishing the doctrine of the Trinity, refer to John x. 20, and xvi. 5; and another from Cyprian (*de Unit. Eccl.* p. 79) refers to 1 John v. 8, where the spirit, the water, and the blood, were interpreted patristically as direct symbols of the Trinity.

The words probably crept into the text gradually from Greek notes on the passage, and from the expression of Cyprian, which would be placed alongside to show how he interpreted St. John's meaning. The second place in Cyprian runs thus: "The Lord says, 'I and My Father are one'; and again, concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it is written: 'And these three are one.'"

INTRODUCTION.

Their first appearance is in a work ascribed to Vigilus, of Thapsus, at the close of the fifth century. They afterwards occur in Latin translations. They first appeared in print in the earliest Greek edition, the Complutensian, published A.D. 1522. (See Dr. Scrivener's *Introduction to the Critical Study of the New Testament*, on this passage.)

Erasmus at first refused them, but at last yielded to pressure, when he heard that they were in the Codex Britannicus. But that manuscript is only of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Stephanus, Beza, and the Textus Receptus followed his lead. Luther never translated them; in his first commentary he pronounced them spurious, in his second he commented on them. We owe them solely to the reluctant deference paid by Erasmus to unlearned current opinion. There is hardly a passage in all literature more demonstrably spurious.

On the internal evidence, after such adverse criticism, it is hardly necessary to speak, but it may be well to quote Sir Isaac Newton. After writing of the fulness and strength of the argument as it stands, without the inserted words, he says: "If you insert the testimony of the three in heaven, you spoil it, for the whole design of the Apostle being here to prove to men by witness the truth of Christ's coming, I would ask how the testimony of the 'three in heaven' makes to this purpose? If their testimony be not given to men, how does it prove to them the truth of Christ's coming? If it be, how is the testimony in heaven distinguished from that on earth? It is the same Spirit which witnesses

both in heaven and in earth. If in both cases it witnesses to us men, wherein lies the difference between its witnessing in heaven and its witnessing in earth? If in the first case it does not witness to them, to whom does it witness? And to what purpose? And how does its witnessing make to the design of St. John's discourse? Let them make good sense of it who are able; for my part I can make none." (Paraphrastic exposition.)

IX. Literature.—I am indebted chiefly to Dr. Karl Braune, *The Epistles General of John*, in Dr. J. P. Lange's series (an English Translation is published by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh); to Dr. H. A. Ebrard's *Die Briefe Johannes*, Königsberg, 1859 (an English translation was published by T. and T. Clark in 1860); and to Dr. Friedrich Lücke's *Commentar über die Briefe des Evangelisten Johannis*, Bonn, 1836 (an English translation was published by T. and T. Clark in 1837). Perhaps the best authority of all is Erich Haupt, *Der Erste Brief des Johannes*, Colberg, 1870; London, Williams and Norgate. There are also Dr. J. E. Huther's *Handbuch über die Drei Briefe des Apostel Johannes*, 3rd Edition, Gottingen, 1868, in Meyer; De Wette in his *Commentary on the New Testament*; and Düsterdieck's *Die Drei Johanneischen Briefe*, Gottingen, 1852—54.

Of the Greek commentaries, those of Diodorus of Tarsus and Chrysostom have been lost; a few fragments remain from Clement of Alexandria, a few more from Didymus of Alexandria. *Catenæ* have been preserved from Oecumenius, Theophylact, and two Scholiasts.

I. JOHN.

Among Latins, an *Expositio* remains by Augustine, and one by Bede. The epistle was also commented on by Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Zwingli, and Bullinger. Calovius, Grotius, and Bengel are often quoted in modern editions.

Besides the commentaries of

Wordsworth and Alford should be mentioned A. Neander's *The First Epistle of John practically explained*, Berlin, 1851 (translated by Mrs. Conant, New York, 1853), and F. D. Maurice's *The Epistle of John: Lectures on Christian Ethics*, Macmillan, 1867; also the able but posthumous edition of W. E. Jelf.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF

JOHN.

CHAPTER I. — ⁽¹⁾ That which was from the beginning, which

A.D. 90.

we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have

[1. The Exordium (chap. i. 1—4).

(1) OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING: The setting forth of the historical Christ for the spread of human fellowship with the Father and the Son (verses 1—3).

(2) DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE: Fulness of joy for those who should read it (verse 4).]

⁽¹⁾ That which was from the beginning.—The profound emotion, the hearty sympathy, the tender anxiety which St. John feels as he begins his counsels to his friends, mark off this introduction very distinctly from the parallel passage in the Gospel. There it was calm contemplation of the height and depth of Christ's existence; here he vehemently insists on the personal relation between the Word and those to whom He had been revealed.

As in the Gospel, he starts with the grandeur of an indefiniteness beyond which no eye can pierce: At the beginning of all that concerns us, be it world or uni-

verse or all creation, there was—that which we are announcing. "That which," not "Him who," because it is not merely the Person of Christ which he is going to declare, but also His Being, all that relates to Him, His gospel, the treasure of wisdom that lay in Him, His truth, all that could be known about Him by human ken.

The vibrating eloquence of the passage makes the construction at first sight obscure. But take "that declare we unto you" (verse 3) as the principal verb, set aside verse 2 as a parenthesis, notice the rising climax of verse 1 (heard, seen, looked upon, handled), pause at the end of verse 1 to sum up the results of this climax in the words "of (or, *that which concerns*) the Word of life," and at the beginning of verse 3 resume the thoughts interrupted by the parenthesis, and all is at once clear.

Which we have heard.—All those gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, enough to fill countless books could they have been noted down. St. John has given us more of these than any other of the Evangelists; and

handled, of the Word of life; ⁽²⁾ (for the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was mani-

festated unto us;)⁽³⁾ that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

their effect upon him was such that it is almost the same as if he had written down nothing at all of his own; for the thought and style of Him who had loved him more intimately than others, had moulded his own thought and style into a strikingly close resemblance. "We" includes all the eye-witnesses. (Comp. Luke i. 2.)

Which we have seen.—All that is meant by the Word of God in its fullest sense had been seen in the human Person of Jesus of Nazareth during His earthly sojourn, and especially during the three years' ministry. In a similar sense Jesus Himself said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," John xiv. 9. (Comp. chap. iv. 14; Isa. xl. 5; 2 Pet. i. 6.)

With our eyes.—This gives the same force as "the Word was made flesh;" it was an actual personal visible revelation, as opposed to the evolving of a religious system out of the inner consciousness or reflection.

Which we have looked upon.—A more deliberate and closer contemplation; for which John had special opportunities, as one of the inner three, and again as he who lay on Jesus' bosom. There is a change of tense implying emphasis on the historic fact, "which in those days we gazed upon."

And our hands have handled.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 49; Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 27. This and the foregoing expressions might be directed against Cerinthus and the Doketists—those that held that Christ was only a phantom.

Of the Word of life.—*All that concerns the Word of the true Life*, the Reason, or Son, or Express Image of God, in whom was inherent all life, material as well as moral or religious. (Comp. John i. 4; v. 26; xi. 25; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 3.)

⁽²⁾ **For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.**

—The parenthesis reiterates with redoubled force that the whole essence of the relation of God to man lies in the audible, visible, tangible, historical appearance of God in Jesus. After the manner of St. John, the word "life" at the end of the last sentence suggests the form of the phrasing in the new sentence: Jesus was that *Eternal Life* which was at the side of the Father, in communion with Him, in equal intercourse with Him; that Life on which all other existence, physical and spiritual, depend (1) for its license to exist, (2) for its fulfilment of the end for

Christ. ⁽⁴⁾ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.
⁽⁵⁾ This then is the message

which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light,
Chaps. i. 5—ii. 28. God is Light. Chap. i. 5. The leading thought

which it was created. (See Note on John i. 4.)

[2. First Half. God is Light (chap. i. 5—ii. 28).]

- (1) STATEMENT OF THE LEADING THOUGHT (verse 5).
- (2) FIRST INFERENCE: The true fellowship (verses 6, 7); the Christian must not sin.
- (3) SECOND INFERENCE: Confession of sins (verses 8—10); the Christian must not conceal his sin.
- (4) THIRD INFERENCE: Remedy for sins (chap. ii. 1, 2).
- (5) OBEDIENCE THE SIGN OF WALKING IN LIGHT (verses 3—8).
- (6) ESPECIALLY BROTHERLY LOVE (9—11).
- (7) THE THINGS THEY MUST NOT LOVE IF THEY WALKED IN THE LIGHT (12—17).
- (8) THE MANIFESTATIONS OF DARKNESS (18—28).
 - (a) Signs whereby they should know the forerunners of the last time (18—23).
 - (b) Exhortation to continue in the light (24—28).]

(1) ⁽⁵⁾ This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you.—What the Son had received from the Father, this the Apostles were to report to the world. The attention is aroused, as by the silence before the thunderstorm, to expect a central and fundamental notion of the utmost importance.

That God is light.—Here is the essence of Christian theology, the truth about the Deity as opposed to all the imperfect conceptions of Him which had embittered the minds of the wise. To the heathen, Deity had meant angry, malevolent beings, worshipped best by the secrecy of outrageous vice; to the Greeks and Romans, forces of nature transformed into superhuman men and women, powerful and impure; to the philosophers, an abstraction either moral or physical; to the Gnostics it was a remote idea, equal and contending forces of good and evil, recognisable only through less and less perfect deputies. All this John, summing up what the Old Testament and our Lord had said about the Almighty Father, sweeps away in one simple declaration of truth. Light was God's garment in Ps. civ. 2; to Ezekiel (chap. i. 2), the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord was brightness; to Habakkuk (chap. iii. 3), His brightness was as the light; Christ had called the sons of God children of the light (John xii. 36), and announced Himself as the Light of the World (chap. viii. 12); in the Hebrews (chap. i. 3), Christ was the refracted ray of the Father's glory, "the express image of His person;" to James, the Almighty was the Father of all lights (chap. i. 17); to Paul, He dwells "in the light that no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. vi. 16); to St. Peter, the Christian state is an admission "into His marvellous light"

and in him is no darkness

Chap. i. 6, 7. at all. ⁽⁶⁾ If Light excludes we say that sin.

we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie,

and do not the truth:

⁽⁷⁾ but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ

(1 Pet. ii. 9). These ideas John comprehends: God is Light. Light physical, because (1) it was He who called everything first out of darkness, and (2) from whom proceeds all health and perfection; light intellectual, because (1) He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge, and (2) in His mind exist the ideals after which all things strive; light moral, because (1) His perfection shows that the difference between good and evil is not merely a question of degree, but fundamental and final, and (2) the life of Christ had exhibited that contrast sharply: once for all. Thus, on this declaration depends the whole doctrine of sin: sin is not merely imperfection; it is enmity to God. There can be no shades of progression, uniting good and evil: in Him is no darkness at all. Good and evil may be mixed in an individual: in themselves they are contrary.

(2) ⁽⁶⁾ If we say.—A favourite form with John, expressing sympathetic delicacy.

That we have fellowship with him . . . —Some of the Gnostics (like the Anabaptists) said that on account of their spiritual knowledge they were free to act as they liked, without committing sin. For walking as a description of the spiritual state, compare chap. ii. 6; 2 John vi.; Rom. vi. 4, viii. 4; Eph. iv. 17; Phil. iii. 20.

Darkness would include any

conscious habit which was opposed to God's example of perfection.

We lie.—We are a self contradiction, and we know it.

And do not the truth.—The truth with St. John is as much a matter of action as of thought and word; that sphere of conduct which is in harmony with God, whose nature is Light.

⁽⁷⁾ **As he is in the light.**—The effulgence of the atmosphere of the perfectly good, the sinlessly loving, the gloriously pure, which created by God and proceeding from Him, is specially "His throne." At the same time, wherever such characteristics of Divine Light are found, there He is particularly present.

We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—The antithesis to "lying and doing not the truth," presented under the twofold aspect of (1) the brotherly result of walking with God, (2) its purifying influence. Each human being that comes near us becomes the object of our friendly sympathy; and the sacrifice of Christ has both put away the sin of the world and prevents sin from reigning in our mortal bodies; it obtains forgiveness for us, and by reminding us that it was sin that brought Jesus to the Cross, has a continually purifying power over us, through the Spirit of Christ and of the Father.

his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ⁽⁸⁾ If we say that

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and

the truth is not in us.

⁽⁹⁾ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to

forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ⁽¹⁰⁾ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

After
A.D. 90.

CHAPTER II.—⁽¹⁾ My little children, these things

(See 1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. i. 7, 19, 20; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19—23.)

(3) ⁽⁸⁾ If we say that we have no sin.—The preceding words had reminded St. John that even mature Christians, though certainly not “walking in darkness,” yet have sinful tendencies in themselves: sensuous impulses, non-spiritual inclinations, lack of self-knowledge, a lowered standard, principles and views borrowed partly from the world, wavering of will, and hence even graver faults. Not to admit this would be to mislead ourselves, and in us the power and energy of light, searching the very corners of the heart, would not be working. (See Rom. vii. 18—23; Gal. v. 17.)

⁽⁹⁾ If we confess our sins.—An advance in the thought from the general “having sin.” Confession to God must recognise and measure each particular fault. (Pss. xxxii. 5; li. 3; Prov. xxviii. 13; Luke xvi. 21.)

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—He, from the context, cannot possibly be any other than God. Here another grand progression of thought meets us: not merely “we are in the truth,” but the actual and glorious result on

God’s side; faithful and just on account of Christ’s sacrifice and our repentance. For the double notion of forgiving and cleansing, see Note on verse 7. The Romish interpreters, in their arbitrary way, limit the cleansing here to purgatory.

⁽¹⁰⁾ If we say that we have not sinned.—The argument of the passage equally excludes the interpretation “freedom from guilt since conversion” as “innocence during the whole life.” St. John is here repeating, in a more emphatic form, the thought of verse 8.

We make him a liar, and his word is not in us.—Stronger far than “we lie,” or “the truth is not in us.” Our foolish presumption is regarded in its worst aspect: an impiety against God, whose word, revelation, appeal to our conscience, and witness by the Spirit, are thus blasphemously contradicted. Parallel to “we do not the truth” and “the truth is not in us,” the practical result here is that we cannot be regarded as having in any sense received God’s revelation into our hearts.

II.

(4) The third idea that arises from the great fact that God is Light has already been suggested

write I unto you, that ye
Chap. ii. 1, 2. sin not. And
The remedy for if any man
sin. sin, we have

an advocate with the
 Father, Jesus Christ the
 righteous: ⁽²⁾ and he is the
 propitiation for our sins:

(chap. i. 7), but now takes its distinct place in the series. It is the doctrine of Reconciliation and Redemption. St. John does not wish them to contemplate with complacency the probability of sinning; but to remember gratefully, in spite of falls, that the Author and Restorer of Light has provided a remedy both for the offence before God, and for its effect on themselves. First comes the principle that we must not sin; second, the admission that we do sin; third, the consolation for actual sin when it is in spite of sincere zeal for sanctification.

⁽¹⁾ **My little children.**—Six times in the letter occurs this diminutive of tender and caressing love: chaps. ii. 12, 28; iii. 18; iv. 4; v. 21. He was aged, he felt a fatherly care for them, he was their spiritual progenitor. (Comp. Gal. iv. 9.) The thought of the shame and misery of sin melted his heart. "My child," was what he called out to the lapsed youth, according to Eusebius (*H. E.* iii. 23).

These things.—He carries them on through the former points up to the new thought.

That ye sin not.—Another side of the object of the teaching: their joy could not be full unless they were earnest against sin. And yet the most holy would not be perfect.

If any man sin.—See chap. i. 8—10.

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.—The word here trans-

lated Advocate was translated Comforter in John xiv. 16, 25; xv. 26; xvi. 7. It has two meanings; one, as in Job xvi. 2, he who comforts, or exhorts; the other, as here, he who is appealed to—a proxy, or attorney. (Comp. Rom. viii. 26; Heb. iv. 14—16; vii. 25.) The Redeemer, the Word made flesh, and reascended with His human nature, is that part of the Deity which assures us of the ever-active vitality of divine love. If the justice of God is connected most with the Father, the mercy is pledged by the Son. He has exalted our nature, undertaken our interests, presents our prayers, and will one day be surrounded by the countless millions of His human brothers whom He has rescued, wearing the same nature as Himself. He is represented as continuing our Advocate, because otherwise His work might appear a mere separate earthly manifestation; "righteous," because Christ, the only blameless example of human nature, can alone intercede for it with God (Heb. vii. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 18; John xvi. 8—10). The Arminian translation actually adds "and blameless." Augustine remarks that St. John did not set forth any apostle or saint as intercessor (here, if anywhere, he would have done so), but only Christ. "We" is not the Church corporately, but merely another instance of St. John's kindly delicacy, as in chap. i. 6, &c.

⁽²⁾ **And he is the propitiation for our sins.**—On the word

and not for our's only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.* ⁽³⁾ And hereby we do know that we

know him, if we keep his command-ments. ⁽⁴⁾ He that saith, I

Chap. ii. 3—8.
Assurance
through obe-
dience.

“propitiation,” see the Introduction. By the satisfaction which the voluntary sacrifice of the Saviour offers to that divine order which requires the punishment of rebellion, both for its own correction and for a universal warning, the whole Deity has been rendered propitious, His graciousness has been called out, the righteousness of Rom. iii. 16 has been set in motion, that willeth not the death of a sinner, and is higher than mere retributive justice. (Comp. chap. iv. 10; John xiv. 5, 6; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 18, 21; Heb. ii. 17, ix. 28, x. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 21—24.)

And not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—This statement must not be limited. Its scope is that Christ's redemption was offered for the whole of mankind, from Adam to the last man. Who lay hold of the redemption, must be determined on other considerations. (Comp. chap. iv. 14; John i. 29; iv. 42.) Multitudes may be saved through this redemption who never heard of Christ (Acts x. 34, 35; Rom. ii. 14, 15). St. John's object in introducing this truth here is to rebuke the arrogance of those Christians who looked down on the non-Christian world as outside the Fatherhood and mercies of God. Such an error might be seen, for example, in the heated partisanship of a Crusader or persecutor for a civilization politically Christian against one outside his own sympathies. (Comp. Tit iii. 2—7; Rom. xi. 17, 18.)

(5) The fourth inference from the doctrine that God is Light analyses more accurately the general expression of chap. i. 7, *walking in the light*. If Christ is, as in verses 1, 2, the Paraclete and Propitiation of the world, it becomes necessary to ascertain whether He is this to us; lest, when this salvation is offered, we condemn ourselves by rejecting it. The test is, “obedience to the commandments, especially in brotherly love.”

(3) **Hereby means, by what follows.**

That we know him.—Rather, *have known Him* (so also in verse 4, *I have known Him*); that we have not grasped a shadow, but have been in intercourse with the living God, who reveals Himself not through speculation, but through a true inward life of man.

If we keep his commandments.—Christ's—because of the reference to John xiv. 15, “Keep” like a precious heirloom, watching them against the inroads of our lower nature. (Comp. Matt. xix. 17; xxviii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 14.) If each man's conscience was the standard of practice, confusion would again reign in morals as it reigned in the days of the Sophists at Athens. (Compare Plato's *Republic*, Bk. ii., Jowett's translation.) A code and an example fitted for all times and all circumstances have been given by our Lord.

(4) **He that saith . . .**—In particularising the general pro-

know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

⁽⁵⁾ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the

love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁽⁶⁾ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to

position according to his custom, St. John rejects the first person plural as shocking, unreal, and artificial, and throws the blasphemy on some third person. So "is a liar" is stronger than "we lie," and "we deceive ourselves;" in such a case the lie has entered thoroughly into the man's nature.

⁽⁵⁾ But whoso keepeth his word.—The revelation of the will of God, looked at as a whole.

In him verily is the love of God perfected.—St. John has before his mind an ideal of a man so filled with the Spirit that in all things he embodies the will of God; the love that such a man has for God is indeed complete. But he knows that the best of the human race can only approach such an ideal in different degrees, at a great distance; and the perfection of the love which they bear to God will vary in the same degree. (Comp. chaps. ii. 15; iii. 17; iv. 12; v. 3.) "In him verily;" rather, *Truly in him*. It is most emphatic, and refers back "the truth is not in him," in verse 4.

Hereby know we that we are in him.—Comp. verse 3 and chap. i. 6; without such a test there could be no happiness in religion. "In him" implies that we are saved by His grace, surrounded by His love, inspired by His thoughts, partakers of His nature, filled by His Spirit, the dwelling-

place of the Father and the Son, with certain access to the divine throne and certain answer to prayer, heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

⁽⁶⁾ Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

—Abiding in Him—in Christ—is an evident reference to John xv. 4—11. In the terms of verses 3—5 there is a double gradation: on the one hand, knowing Him, being in Him, remaining in Him; on the other, keeping His commandments, keeping His word, walking even as He walked. The last expression is the strongest of the latter three, as it views the Christian in action. The walk of Christ was the walk in the light (comp. chap. i. 7); divine love the secret spring developing itself in a new virtue for every variety of circumstance. In verses 7—11 brotherly love is introduced as the special manifestation of this obedience that springs from the walk in the light. At a superficial glance it might have been thought that the personal address introduced a new paragraph; it is really only like the "Verily, verily," of our Lord, breaking in to emphasise a message to be brought directly home to the hearts of the readers. The life of obedience, the walk in light, is nothing else but the life of brotherly love: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another" (John xv. 12; comp. also chap. xiii. 34, 35).

walk, even as he walked.

(7) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word

which ye have heard from the beginning. (8) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you : because the darkness is past, and the true

(7) I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning—*i.e.*, “I am preparing to give you a special direction, which has been implied already by the walk in light. If you look at it from the point of view of your first entrance into Christ’s kingdom it is old, because it was the chief point of His moral teaching which you then heard. If you look at its effect in you it is new, because (1) it had never been taught so forcibly and clearly before Christ; (2) you are so imperfect that you are always liable to forget it; (3) your obedience to the command can never be complete, but will always require fresh growth; (4) it can never be permanent without continual renewal by Christ’s presence.” “*Ye*” is therefore his present Christian audience; “*from the beginning*” implies the time of their conversion; “*the word*” is here less wide than in verse 6, and means rather Christ’s teaching on this point. (Comp. 2 John, verse 5; Lev. xix., xviii. 24.)

(8) Which thing is true in him and in you.—The commandment might have hung in the

air and remained “old,” *i.e.*, confined to the definite point of time of its promulgation, had it not been embodied for ever (1) in the living example of Christ during His life on earth; (2) in His active presence and power since His resurrection; (3) in the conduct and character of His people, radically renewed by His Spirit and continually growing after His image. (Comp. chap. iii. 23; John xiii. 34.)

Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. — Rather, *is passing away; already shineth*. Here he gives the reason why he announces as new what he says is already truly realised in Christ and in process of realisation in His people. A visible change, a notable renovation, is going on; the gross darkness that covered the face of the earth is being rent away in the circle of the apostolic preaching; the life of the Lord, which gleamed forth for three-and-thirty years in the cities and on the hill-sides of Judæa and Samaria and Galilee, is now bursting far and wide into ever-increasing brightness; wondrously quick is the spread of the rays of His glory; multitudes in every known land are gathered into His kingdom. Old things are passing away as the Apostle looks round, and all things are becoming

light now shineth. ⁽⁹⁾ He
that saith he
is in the light,
and hateth
his brother, is

Chap. i. 9—11.
Obedienceshewn
in brotherly love.

1 Gr.
scandal.

in darkness even until now.
⁽¹⁰⁾ He that loveth his
brother abideth in the
light, and there is none oc-
casion of stumbling¹ in

new. (Comp. John i. 4—9; Rom. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 4, 5.)

(6) Here (verses 9—11) is the chief way in which the old commandment, the new commandment, the word from the beginning, the walk in light would be manifested; brotherly love towards those with whom we have fellowship in Jesus Christ, God's Son. And as He, by being the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, had declared the universality of God's family and kingdom, so the sympathy of believers would extend in different degrees as far as the whole human race; to those first who were conscious of the same hopes as themselves; to those next who might be brought to share them; to those, perhaps, in a less degree, who in every nation feared God and worked righteousness without knowing the Saviour personally; and so on, finally, to all who did not wilfully excommunicate themselves. But the brotherly love would be chiefly amongst Christian friends, else it would be diffused into nothingness.

⁽⁹⁾ He that saith—The whole history of religious rancour has been a deplorable illustration of these words. Controversy for principles honestly and reasonably held is one thing; prejudice, spite, private censures and condemnations, harsh words, suspicions, jealousies,

misunderstandings and misrepresentations are the chief props of the kingdom of darkness among Christian churches and nations. (Comp. John xiii. 34; xv. 12; 1 Cor. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. i. 22; 2 Pet. i. 7—9.)

Hateth means not merely the absence of love, but the presence, in ever so small a degree, of dislike or any of the feelings already described, or those kindred to them.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **He that loveth.**—From the associations connected with love in poetry and romance this saying sounds strange. But all such love is tinged with passion, and the desire of satisfying some personal lack; this is the pure disinterested seeking for another's welfare, of which Christ was the great example. It is that which the modern scientific non-Christian world is trying to make its religion; but without the Christian motive, and cultivated for its own sake instead of by the working of the Spirit of God, it seems artificial and powerless.

Occasion of stumbling.—*Stumbling-block.* (Comp. Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16; Ps. cxix. 165; John xi. 9, 10; Rom. ix. 33; xiv. 13; 1 Cor. i. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 7.) When love such as Christ's is the ruling principle of life, then the stumbling-blocks of human nature are removed, such as impurity, pride, selfishness, anger, envy, suspicion, unsympathetic coldness, censoriousness.

him. ⁽¹¹⁾ But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither

he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. ⁽¹²⁾ I write unto you, little children,

⁽¹¹⁾ But he that hateth.—Verse 10 was an antithesis to verse 9; verse 11 is, after St John's manner, an antithesis again to verse 10, putting the matter of verse 9 more strongly and fully, and forcibly concluding the section which describes the walk in the light.

Walketh in darkness.—This describes the acts of the man whose selfishness or other sins interfere with his love. Such are all insisting upon class distinctions; all ambitions, political, social, or personal; everything that savours of shrinking from "in honour preferring one another."

Knoweth not whither he goeth.—This refers to the "occasion of stumbling" in verse 10. He is sure to stumble; is like a blind man groping his way among pitfalls; has all the snares of human nature within him. (Comp. Isa. vi. 9, *et seq.*; Matt. xiii. 14 *et seq.*; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26; 2 Cor. iv. 4.)

Hath blinded.—Just as it is we ourselves who make the gate strait and the way narrow, so it is our own fault if the darkness settles down on our eyes.

(7) THE THINGS THEY MUST NOT LOVE IF THEY WALKED IN THE LIGHT (verses 12—17).—The solemnity of the thoughts of verses 9 and 11 is too much for the warm heart of the Apostle. He cannot bear even to seem to suggest that his "dear little children" are shrouded in the gloomy horrors of

moral darkness, haunted by the faithful memories of their sins, and enticed hither and thither by the malevolent spirits of evil. He will warn them with the most tender and pitiful affection against the wicked one, the world, the flesh, the follies and vanities of the human heart; but first he will show them frankly what he thinks of them, what he hopes of them, the trust he places in them, the grounds which he takes for granted in writing to them.

⁽¹²⁾ I write unto you, little children.—The arrangement of these triplets should be prefaced by saying that the last "I write," in verse 13 is, according to the best reading, "I wrote," or "I have written;" and that the "little children" of verse 12 is the same word as that which he used in verse 1 for the whole class of his readers, and is therefore quite general, but that the "little children" of verse 13 is a different word, meaning children in age. So we get:—

I write.

I wrote.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. All readers. | 1. Children in age. [Suggested, according to the perfect simplicity of St. John's style, by the term used in the first set for his readers generally.] |
|-----------------|--|

because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. ⁽¹³⁾ I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I

Chap. ii. 12-14.
His opinion of
different classes
of his hearers.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 2. Fathers. | 2. Fathers. |
| 3. Youths. | 3. Youths. |

Reasons.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Forgiveness. | 1. Knowledge of the Father. |
| 2. Knowledge of Christ. | 2. Knowledge of Christ. |
| 3. Victory. | 3. Strength, perseverance, victory. |

Some have thought the second triplet an explanatory note that has crept into the text; others that "I write" refers to what he is doing at the moment, "I wrote" the view they would take when they read what he had written. It seems better, however, if we allow the Gospel to have been written first, to refer "I am writing" to the Epistle; "I did write" to the Gospel.

Because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.—Rather, *have been forgiven*. When Christ expired on the cross, the sins of all were forgiven who should in after-time believe and carry on their repentance towards perfection. The process is realised in the soul when it wakes up to a sense of love of the Saviour through faith.

⁽¹³⁾ **Fathers.**—The heads of families.

Him that is from the begin-

write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. ⁽¹⁴⁾ I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have

ning.—There can be little doubt that this means the same Person as the subject of "His name's sake." (Comp. John i. 1; viii. 58; xvii. 5; Knowledge of Christ is assigned in both cases as the reason for addressing the elder members of his audience, because fully to understand the work, the doctrine, the example of Christ, is a work fitted for mature thought. (Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.)

Young men.—They might be regarded more as still engaged in the work of settling their character, forming their habits, disciplining their inclinations, confirming the choice which all must make for themselves between good and evil. (Comp. 2 Tim. ii. 22.) St. John is not here addressing those who have failed in the struggle and not repented, but those who have got the better of such temptations, or are in process of getting it.

The wicked one.—Comp. chaps. iii. 12; v. 18; Matt. xiii. 19; Eph. vi. 16.)

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Because ye have known.**—To those who have once begun to understand Christ, the topic must always be delightful and interesting.

Because ye are strong.—For the reasons mentioned before, young men have more special need of strength. (Comp. Ps. cxix. 9.)

known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked

one. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Love not the world, neither the things Chap. ii. 15—17. The things contrary to light. that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is

This power can only come through the presence of the message and teaching of God in their hearts, which will be brought by faith in Christ, acceptance of His redemption, and reverential study of His example. When Christ has thus dwelt in their minds, then the victory is won, and the spirits of evil can no longer entice them.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Love not the world.**—Having thus affectionately expressed his hopes about each class of them, the last of the Apostles is freer to express that warning which was suggested to his mind by the mournful picture of verse 11. If they would not walk in darkness—if they would be where the true Light shineth—then they must not love the world. What does “the world” mean? In Acts xvii. 24 it meant the universe; in John i. 9, perhaps more distinctly, the earth; in 1 John ii. 2 the sum-total of mankind; in John viii. 23 that moral order, to be found in this spot of creation, which is antagonistic to God. Thus it became a phrase for all such inventions, plans, customs, thoughts, and estimates of mankind as are not in harmony with the will and purpose of God. It is ridiculous to suppose that St. John intended to condemn the love either of natural philosophy; or of the scenery of that creation which God saw to be very

good, and which sin has been unable to injure; or of all mankind, who are His children. No created thing is evil in itself; the evil lies in the use which man makes of it. We must remember that our Lord said, “I am the Light of the World” (John viii. 12), so that none of the phases of the meaning of the word can be essentially evil, except where it implies man’s own ungodly creations. The world which is not to be loved is the sphere of rebellion, caprice, ambition, vanity, pride, avarice, forgetfulness of God, self-pleasing, sensuous desires and interests, connivance with standards of thought and action antagonistic to the will of God. To take one example: Christ declared all Christians brothers; any respect for rank and wealth beyond a conscientious “bowing in the house of Rimmon” is a sign of the forbidden affection.

The love of the Father is the true posture of the soul towards God. If the soul is evenly balanced between love of God and of the world it is negative and colourless. If the balance incline towards the things that distract from the pure and simple walk with God, then the emotion for Him has died away; if the balance be for Him, “the expulsive power of the new affection” makes the contrary attrac-

not in him. ⁽¹⁶⁾ For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,

but is of the world. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

tions insignificant and increasingly powerless.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **All that is in the world.**—The essence, the kernel of this sphere showing itself in countless ways.

The lust of the flesh—i.e., that proceeds from the earthly nature; all desire taking possession of the soul as a motive for thought and action which does not arise from principles in harmony with the will of God.

The lust of the eyes—i.e., of which the eyes are the seat; all delight in objects living or inanimate apart from their moral and religious importance; personal beauty, for instance, considered otherwise than as an index of a Christ-like soul. (Comp. John vii. 24; viii. 15; 2 Cor. v. 16; Jas. ii. 1.) Our Lord's introspection was of moral qualities in Mark x. 21.

The pride of life.—The Greek word is only used besides in the New Testament in Jas. iv. 16. The phrase means a boastful, ostentatious attitude in regard to the good things of this life allotted by God to be spent in His service. All living up to a supposed social position, instead of as the responsible steward of undeserved bounties, is hereby condemned. Of this any social organism existing for pleasure instead of for moral or religious ends might be considered illustrative.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **The world passeth away.**—No reasonable man can set his

affections on what is in its very essence perishable; for the perishable must be ever disappointing, and can in no sense satisfy. It is only passion, and the madness of folly, and the contagion of accumulated examples, that influence the soul towards what can only create the agonising ache of a growing void.

And the lust thereof.—Of all the long succession of impulses excited by the world, nothing remains but the injury which they have inflicted.

But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—There is no permanence but that of defeat and failure in what is in rebellion to the Supreme Author and Ruler of all things. But that which has continuously derived all its sustenance from Him, must have absorbed from Him the "bright shoots" of that "everlastingness" which is His. Everything that is good is a part of Him, and can no more fade than He can. It is by being in harmony with this undeviating tendency of righteousness to victory that real happiness discovers its own secret. (Comp. John x. 28, 29; 1 Cor. vii. 31; Jas. i. 10; 1 Pet. i. 24.)

(8) **THE MANIFESTATIONS OF DARKNESS (verses 18—28).**

(a) *Signs whereby they should know the forerunners of the last time* (verses 18—23).

(b) *Exhortation to continue in the light* (verses 24—28).

(18) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it

Chap. ii. 18—23.
Signs of the fore-
runners of the
last hour.

is the last time. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were

After cheering his readers by stating the grounds of his writing, and the opinion which he has of them, he reminds them of the momentous epoch at which they are living, of the discriminating effect which it has had on mere nominal Christians, and of the signs by which such might be known, introducing, as in verse 12, a saving clause to separate his friends from the condemnatory category. The train of thought connected with "the last hour" is suggested by verse 17, "the world passeth away," and is appropriate to the treatment of the general subject of light as it brings the manifestation of its contrary.

(18) **The last time.**—Rather, *hour*. Until the visions of the Apocalypse, St. John naturally thought from Christ's words, "If he tarry till I come" (John xxi. 22), that he would see the last days before the Second Advent. Our Lord, in Matt. xxiv. 36, distinctly asserted that not even the angels knew the day and the hour; and on this subject accordingly the Apostles were evidently left to their own conjectures. St. Paul expected a speedy return (2 Thess. iv. 17); so did St. Peter (2 Pet. iii. 12—15). In the same way St. John thought that he recognised in the serious signs of his time that final

period spoken of in Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1; Acts ii. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; and 2 Pet. iii. 3. And it was indeed true that with the approaching death of the last living witness of the Lord's life, the new revelation was being finally closed, miraculous outpourings of the Spirit were ceasing, heresies and opponents were growing, and the lives of Christians were beginning to fade into the light of common day.

Antichrist.—See *Introduction*. Of the terrible personage or power prophesied in 2 Thess. ii. 1—12, Rev. xi., xiii., and xvii., the "liars" already mentioned in chap. i. 6, and afterwards in chap. iv. 3, 14, are regarded as forerunners. So might Hymenæus and Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), Diotrephes (3 John, verse 9), the Nicolaitanes (Rev. ii. 6), or Simon Magus, Cerinthus, Ebion, any who opposed the teaching of Christ from within or without. (Comp. also Jude, verse 4.) See *Excursus* on 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.

(19) **They went out.**—The special instances in his mind were of men who had seemed to belong to the body of Christ, but were never really penetrated by His Spirit. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 3—7, 24—30, 47—50.) St. John is not pronouncing a general law that "grace is indefectible;" but in look-

notall of us. ⁽²⁰⁾ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. ⁽²¹⁾ I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the

truth. ⁽²²⁾ Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. ⁽²³⁾ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth*

ing back on each case of apostasy he sees there must have been some element in the character not subdued to Christ. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. vi. 4—6) regarded it as possible for those who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost to “fall away.” They might have partaken of the Holy Ghost in some degree, and yet not have been wholly Christian. Safety lies in the continual appeal to Christ.

^(20, 21) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.—If the Antichrists had formerly any unction at all from Christ, the Holy One (comp. John xv. 26; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; Eph. iii. 16; Phil. i. 29), they must have grieved His Spirit. But St. John’s hearers were still “holding the Head,” and therefore had the Divine instinct which “guided them into all truth.” If they trusted to the Spirit in simplicity, questions of morality and religion, all that concerned the soul, would be made sufficiently plain to them. He does believe this of them; humbly he begs them not to think that he distrusts them. If he did not think

that they had the eye of their understanding spiritually enlightened, he would know that there would be no response in their hearts to his words, nor interest about them in their intelligence.

⁽²²⁾ Who is a liar?—Rather, *the liar*, the enemy of light above all others. St. John thrusts home his point by a lively personal reference. All who err from Christ’s teaching are liars; the greatest of all, he who may be called actually Antichrist, is he who denies that the Crucified is the Son of God. Such a man, with the opportunity of seeing and believing in the light, by refusing to do so loses the knowledge of God in the impressive beauty of His relation as Father revealed in Jesus. And a God who cannot be revealed, who has no Son, who cannot be heard or seen, is at best a cold abstraction.

⁽²³⁾ Whosoever denieth the Son. . . .—The sentence in italics has good authority, and should stand as part of the text. “Acknowledging” here, as the opposite of that denial which involved such weighty consequences, implies, as Bede says, “the confession of the heart, the mouth, and the deed.”

After this description of the manifestations of darkness in their midst, and of his trust in them, he winds up with some forcible prac-

the Son hath the Father also. ⁽²⁴⁾ Let that there-

Chap. ii. 24—28.
Exhortation to
continue in the
light.

fore abide in
you, which ye
have heard
from the be-

ginning. If that which ye
have heard from the be-
ginning shall remain in

you, ye also shall continue
in the Son, and in the
Father. ⁽²⁵⁾ And this is the
promise that he hath pro-
mised us, *even* eternal
life. ⁽²⁶⁾ These *things* have
I written unto you con-
cerning them that seduce
you. ⁽²⁷⁾ But the anointing

tical appeals, weaving together with
concentrated power ideas which
have already been suggested, and
introducing the most familiar asso-
ciations of the Lord's teaching.

^(24, 25) *As for you* (omit "there-
fore"), *that which ye heard from
the beginning, let it remain in you.
If there remain in you that which ye
heard from the beginning, ye in your
turn shall remain in the Son and in
the Father. And this is the promise
which He Himself promised to us, the
life eternal.*

He turns over in his mind the
question, "What shall I say
to my dear children about these
sad apostasies that shake the faith
and darken the heart?" Well,
there is nothing new to tell them;
they have heard it all, only let it
remain fixed and fresh in them.
Then all he could wish will be
theirs; they will be living and
moving and having their being in
the life and mind and love of the
Son, the beloved Lord, who has
ascended, and through Him not less
in the Father Almighty Himself.
And the great promise which the
Son made to them and to the world
transcends all else, for it is of life
eternal.

⁽²⁴⁾ *Let that therefore abide.*
—An echo of John xv. 7.

Which ye have heard from

the beginning.—Since each in-
dividual first felt the gospel brought
home to his heart. Its message is
always the same.

⁽²⁵⁾ **Eternal life.**—The life
which cannot be measured by days
and years, but is the enjoyment of
the blessedness of virtue. This is
a present fact, begun as soon as the
believer begins to be in Christ,
growing more and more unto the
perfect day as he walks more closely
with God, secured for ever when he
enters into his rest, and perfected
in the glory of heaven. (Comp.
John v. 21—26; x. 10, 27, 28; xi.
25, 26; xvii. 3.) That this life,
depending on knowledge of God, is
begun here, does not lessen the
reasonableness of its being per-
fected hereafter, any more than its
future completion prevents its pre-
sent beginning.

⁽²⁶⁾ **These things have I
written.**—To remind them that
he is still on the subject of the
Antichrists, and to sum up what he
has said about them.

⁽²⁷⁾ **But the anointing.**—He
reverts to verses 20 and 21 as a
favourite ground of consolation and
encouragement. Anointing played
a great part in the physical life of
Eastern races. The climate was
dry, sultry, and enervating; un-
guents restored freshness, elasticity,

which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of

¹ Or, it.

all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.¹ ⁽²⁸⁾ And now, little children, abide

and life to the parched and feeble frame. So, like dew reviving the verdure of the hill-side, or ointment restoring the vigour of muscles and sinews, the healing, soothing influence of the Divine Spirit breathes about the children of God, unfolds the meaning of what they have heard, brings all things to their remembrance, and guides them into all truth. They needed not the pretended discoveries of false teachers ; all they wanted was the unction of God to bring home what they had heard from the beginning.

Shall abide in him.—Rather, *abide ye in Him* (imperative). These words are the conclusion to the four parallel clauses of the last half of verse 27. On the grounds that their minds were visibly alive to spiritual insight ; that this insight was from God, a living power, witnessed to by the life of Christ and His Apostles, and all the phenomena of Christianity ; that it was no mere human theory like the speculation of false teachers, demonstrably at variance with Christ ; and, lastly, that it had already brought home to their inmost souls the priceless lessons of which they were aware, he earnestly charges them, “Abide ye in Christ.”

⁽²⁸⁾ **And now.**—As in John xvii. 5 ; Acts iii. 17 ; iv. 29 ; vii. 34 ; x. 5 ; xxii. 16 ; 2 Thess. ii. 6, these words mark a conclusion arising naturally from previous

thoughts. As they have this holy anointing, and can exercise the Christian critical ability, and can see the truth, all they have to do is to let their whole being rest in the Son ; this cannot be urged upon them too often, or too simply. Their safety depends on the exercise of their own will. (Comp. John xv. 1—6.)

Little children.—Tenderly, as in verse 18.

When he shall appear.—Rather, *if*. Compare verse 18 for the thought of the possible nearness of Christ's Second Advent. He passes to the first person plural, to place himself under the same experiences, laws, promises, hopes, fears, as his friends. It would be foreign to his nature to express a personal wish that he himself might not be ashamed on the score of their declension.

So ends the treatise on LIGHT. From the thought that the true fellowship excluded sin, he passed on to forbid the concealment of sin, for sin could not be altogether banished ; then he spoke of the remedy for sin ; then of the test of walking in the Light ; so he was led to speak of the chief Christian characteristic ; and then of the things to be forsworn. That led him to think of nominal Christians who had been unable to forswear them, and had therefore become enemies of Christ and beacons of warning. His friends needed no practical counsel except reminders

in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. ⁽²⁹⁾ If ye know

¹ Or,
know
ye.

that he is righteous, ye know ¹ that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Chaps. ii. 29—v. 12. God is Love. Chap. ii. 29. Criterion of sonship.

of what they knew, and exhortations to exercise their moral choice by holding on to Christ.

[3. Second Half. God is Love (chaps. ii. 29—v. 12).

- (1) RIGHTEOUSNESS THE CRITERION OF DIVINE BIRTH (chap. ii. 29).
- (2) THE DIVINE BIRTH THE OUTCOME OF GOD'S LOVE (chap. iii. 1—3).
- (3) ITS CONSEQUENCE ON HUMAN CONDUCT (verses 4—10).
- (4) BROTHERLY LOVE THE NECESSARY FLOWER OF THE DIVINE BIRTH (verses 10—18).
- (5) THE GLORIOUS RESULTS OF GOD'S LOVE IN SONSHIP (verses 19—24).
 - (a) Assurance (verses 19—21).
 - (b) Grant of requests (verse 22).
 - (c) Presence of God (verse 24).
 - (d) Gift of the Spirit (verse 24).
- (6) NECESSITY OF TRYING THE SPIRITS (chap. iv. 1—6).
- (7) THE PERFECT LOVE THE SUREST TEST (verses 7—21).
- (8) FAITH THE TEST OF LOVE (chap. v. 1—12).
 - (a) The power of faith (verses 1—5).

(b) *The witness of faith* (verses 6—10).

(c) *The content of faith* (verses 11, 12).]

(1) RIGHTEOUSNESS THE CRITERION OF DIVINE BIRTH (verse 29).—In passing on to think of God in His character of Love rather than of Light (this, with several interludes, is the leading thought up to chap. v. 12), St. John is led, by the earnest exhortation of verse 28 (with which he closes the former subject) to pause for a moment on the idea of righteousness, which, as it was the main object of the earlier dispensation, so is the final cause of Christianity. This suggests to his mind the new idea, "The righteous are born of God." Wherever there was a spark of true righteousness, there was a birth from God.

⁽²⁹⁾ He is righteous.—St. John looks at the Father and the Son as so essentially one, that from his use of the pronoun merely it would not be clear which Person he meant. Here "born of Him," shows that he thinks of the Father, or of the Deity in its oneness; not specially of Christ.

Ye know.—Rather, *ye perceive*. A Divine germ, sent by the will of God, has come into the life, and, just as the body and spirit grow in the womb, so the new man is gradually formed in the soul, not to be perfected till the future life.

CHAPTER III.—⁽¹⁾ Be-

hold, what

Chap. iii. 1—3. Sonship the index of God's love.

manner of love the

Father hath

bestowed upon us, that we

After
A.D. 90.

should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

⁽²⁾ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth

III.

(2) THE DIVINE BIRTH THE OUTCOME OF GOD'S LOVE (chap. iii. 1—3). The thought of the new birth suddenly fires the Apostle's mind with reverent amazement, in which he calls on his hearers to join. He then sketches some consequences of the Sonship:—

- (a) *Neglect by the world, just as the world knew not Him who made them sons.*
- (b) *The future glory in the perfected likeness.*
- (c) *The purifying result of hope.*

⁽¹⁾ **Sons.**—Rather, *children*. The asserted relationship is no mere empty rhetorical title. It is not only a comparison to point origin, dependence, sympathy, care, union, love; it is a fact. As our spiritual life comes from God, we have but to be conscious of it, and to claim its privileges.

(2 a.) It passes before St. John's mind how strange it is that the stream of the world's thought, the tide of the world's history, should be going on as they had been before Christ came. Of how small account was the old man, at Ephesus or elsewhere, in the eyes of the wise, the powerful, the popular! Why was this? Because God manifest in Christ had been unintelligible to the world as such, or, if intelligible, the cause only of

antagonism. As far as the children were like their Father, so far would the elements that made up their character be antagonistic to the elements that make up the character of the world. For, as far as "the world" exists at all in the moral meaning of the word, it is a mixture of qualities and tendencies which may or may not be like each other, but which all agree in being opposed to true righteousness.

(2 b.) We can imagine some one saying in the room where St. John was dictating, or the thought occurring to himself, "If you say we are already sons, what shall we be hereafter?" We cannot say. It is not good for us to know. At any rate, there will be the perfected sonship, the completed likeness, the unquiet and rebellious children conformed to the Father's character. (Comp. Rom. viii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Gal. iv. 1; Col. iii. 3.)

Of God.—Literally, *out of God*—a part of His holy nature. (Comp. John i. 12, 13; iii. 3, 5, 6; Rom. xii. 2; Eph. iv. 23, 24; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 3, 23; 2 Pet. i. 4.)

(2) **For we shall see.**—The old philosophical dogma that if knowledge could be perfect it would necessitate virtue, is true in this sense; the more we see God in this life (provided it is a real sight) the more like Him we must be. When we are able to see Him, by entering on the glorified life here-

not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for

we shall see him as he is.
(³) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as

after, our likeness will have grown complete, and it will never again be able to be defaced. (Comp. Ps. xvii. 15; Matt. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Rev. xxii. 4.) A true knowledge must be convincing; when we are permitted to see the actual truth in God Himself, it will be impossible for any corner of the soul to remain unconvinced, unwarmed, unrenewed.

(2 c.) St. John, as usual, turns gently to the practical side of his thought. If we really hold this glorious hope of the future likeness, it cannot help having a correlative force in our present life. Such a hope must be the mother of the determination to be purified here; the resolve to be rid of all pollution in body or soul, and to struggle free from the chains of sins. The word for purifying is applied in the New Testament—

1. To wisdom (Jas. iii. 47);
2. To vows (Acts xxi. 24, 26; xxiv. 18);
3. To the Christian walk (2 Cor. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 22; Jas. iv. 8; 1 Pet. i. 22);
4. To chastity (2 Cor. xi. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 12; v. 2; Tit. ii. 5).

Our Lord gives a list of things that defile in Matt. xv. 18. St. John probably thought of Matt. v. 8 in thus connecting the future vision with present purity.

(3) THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE DIVINE BIRTH ON HUMAN CONDUCT

(chap. iii. 4—10).—This paragraph is an expansion of the thought of verse 3, which was the practical conclusion of the meditation on the Divine love as seen in the new birth. In thinking of the nature of righteousness, of the new birth, and of purity, the Apostle is led to dwell on their opposite, lawlessness, the synonym and essence of sin. His object being to bring purity and righteousness into relief, and to determine who are the children of God and who of the devil, he pursues the contrast by a series of antitheses, introducing, after his manner, reflections suggested by particular stages of the thought.

1st Contrast: Purity, and the act of sin regarded as lawlessness (*abstract*).

Reflection: Christ manifested to take away our sins.

2nd Contrast: Abiding in Christ, we sin not; sinning, we have neither seen nor known (*practical*).

3rd Contrast (in the form of a warning): The righteous are like God; sinners are of the devil (*hortatory*).

Reflection: Christ manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

4th Contrast: The sons of the devil sin; the sons of God keep the germ from Him, and sin not (*explanatory*).

5th Contrast: The criterion between the two sonships

he is pure. ⁽⁴⁾ Whosoever
 committeth
 Chap. iii. 4—10. Moral effects of sin transgres-
 sionship. seth also the
 law: for sin is the transgres-

sion of the law. ⁽⁵⁾ And ye
 know that he was mani-
 fested to take away our
 sins; and in him is no
 sin. ⁽⁶⁾ Whosoever abideth

is doing righteousness and
 (a new thought in this
 passage) loving the brother
 (the test).

life; the first was the means to
 the second.

⁽⁴⁾ Transgresseth also the
 law.—Rather, *doeth lawlessness*.

And in him is no sin.—The
 fact that Christ is perfectly sinless
 is dwelt on because He is the vital
 element of the Christian's being,
 and if present in him must produce
 a result like Himself.

The transgression of the
 law.—Or, *lawlessness*. He is not
 thinking of the law of Moses, but
 defining and analysing the nature
 of sin in general: it is acting from
 caprice instead of on principle, dis-
 obeying the conscience, neglecting
 the will of God, rebelling against
 His commandments.

⁽⁶⁾ Abideth in him.—See chap.
 ii. 6, 24, and John xv. 4. The whole
 nature must consciously repose
 in Christ, breathe His spiritual
 atmosphere, draw all nourishment
 from Him, have no principle of
 thought or action apart from Him.
 This intimate union is regarded as
 the direct consequence of Christ's
 manifestation, and of His sinless
 character as manifested.

⁽⁵⁾ And ye know . . .—The
 Incarnation is here mentioned with
 the purpose of strengthening the
 appeal to purity. The very object
 of Christ's coming was to take
 away our sins by atonement, and
 their power in us by reformation.
 He is Himself sinless. Those who
 really rest firm in Him cannot be
 habitual sinners, nor, on the other
 hand, can habitual sinners be really
 in Him.

Sinneth not.—See Rom. vii. 17.
 Although the Christian does not
 always do what is best, he does not
 willingly commit sin; his real self
 is on the side of God's law.

To take away our sins.—See
 John i. 29. For the use of the word
 "take away," compare John xi. 48;
 xv. 2; xvii. 15; xix. 31, 38. The
 idea of sacrificial substitution was
 uppermost in chap. ii. 2. Here it
 is rather that of sanctification; but
 the other is not excluded. The two
 are always connected in St. John's
 mind. (Comp. chaps. i. 7; iv. 9,
 10, 11.) The purpose of Christ's
 coming was not so much to teach a
 new doctrine as to produce a new

Whosoever sinneth.—Adopts
 the lawless disposition deliberately.
 In the moment of conscious wilful
 sin, any former partial sight or
 knowledge he may have had of
 Christ becomes a thing of the past,
 as if it were not, and proves its
 own inadequacy. Ignatius says,
 "None who professeth faith sinneth,
 and none who hath love hateth.
 They who profess themselves Chris-
 tians will be manifest by what they
 do." (Comp. chap. ii. 19, and
 Matt. vii. 23.) A real saving sight
 of Christ is when our mind becomes
 conscious of the convincing truth,
 beauty, perfection, love, and power

in him sinneth not: who-soever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. ⁽⁷⁾ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous,

even as he is righteous.

⁽⁸⁾ He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might de-

of His existence. The corresponding *knowledge* is when that sight has become experience, the soul having learnt the effect of His strengthening, purifying grace: having proved the happiness of spiritual intercourse with Him; and having meditated continually on the records of the sayings and doings of His earthly manifestation. There may be here a reference to the Gnostics, who said that their "knowledge" was so great that they had no need to work righteousness: grace would be enough, without works.

^(7, 8) By the solemn appeal, "My little children," the practical contrast of verse 7 is introduced in the form of a warning in verses 7 and 8. The words "is of the devil," in the second branch of the antithesis, show that the words "is righteous, even as he is righteous," are meant to claim for the true Christian a likeness of nature to Christ. Although there is no allusion to it here, the teaching of the Epistle to the Romans shows that the eternal righteousness of Christ may be an object of faith, even though His name and earthly manifestation be unknown.

⁽⁸⁾ **Of the devil.**—See on John viii. 44. Not that the devil has created the sinner, but that the

sinner has allowed him to generate his evil nature, until gradually the whole nature may have become evil, and therefore generated by the devil, to the exclusion of any elements of goodness. By making the devil the antithesis to Christ, St. John insists as strongly as it would be possible for him to insist on the moral importance of remembering the existence and kingdom of an allowed power of evil. The work of the Messiah cannot be fully understood without acknowledging this fact of human consciousness.

For the devil sinneth from the beginning.—"For" states the reason why sinners are of the devil. By "from the beginning," therefore, we understand, not the date of the devil's existence, or of the creation of the earth and solar system, or of human history, or of the devil's fall, but the beginning of human sin. As soon as human sin began, then the devil was at work and claiming his parentage.

The Son of God was manifested.—The devil is not honoured by being placed over against the whole Almighty Deity, but is regarded as the special antagonist of the Son. (Compare verse 5.) In taking away our sins Christ would be destroying the works of the devil, which are every possible

stroy the works of the devil. ⁽⁹⁾ Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is

born of God. ⁽¹⁰⁾ In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever

Chap. iii. 10—18.
Sonship shown
in brotherly love

variety of sin. The consequences of sin—affliction, death, condemnation—are rather the wholesome discipline of God.

Verse 9 repeats, in a more perfect form of contrast to verse 8, the thought of verse 7. (Comp. chaps. ii. 29, and iii. 6.) We have seen that the birth of the new nature is not complete till we enter into our rest; so also the freedom from sin is progressive. *His seed* is the Holy Spirit: that influence proceeding from God, imbued with Divine vitality, regenerating, renewing, refreshing, causing the nature of holiness to spring, to grow, to bloom, to bear fruit. The result is the same whether the metaphor is regarded as animal or vegetable. The Christian does not say, "I have the seed of God within me, so I need not mind if I am betrayed into sin." That would alone be enough to prove that the seed of God is not there. If he is betrayed into sin, he trembles lest the seed of God should not be there. He struggles to free his permanent will from all participation in what was wrong. He claims the help of the Spirit in his struggle; and his sincerity shows that it was a genuine *bond fide* betrayal, not a pre-conceived moral choice. "Sinneth not," therefore, looks rather to the Christian's course as a whole. "He cannot sin," means that if he is really born of God it is an im-

possibility for him deliberately to choose evil. If he deliberately chooses evil he is not born of God. "A child of God in this conflict receives indeed wounds daily, but never throws away his arms or makes peace with his deadly foe" (Luther).

Verse 10 sums up the matter in a terse distinction: all mankind are either children of God or children of the devil—they who try to do good, and they who deliberately and consciously choose evil. It is not even for an Apostle to judge which man belongs to which class; at any rate, the true Christian can never be a wilful rebel. And here, as the importance of brotherly love is so constantly before his mind, St. John allows the note which he struck in chap. ii. 9 to enter again into the melody of his thoughts. Brotherly love, the most prominent part of Christian righteousness, may well be mentioned in the contrast between sin and holiness, as it is the most comprehensive of all virtues.

(4) BROTHERLY LOVE THE NECESSARY FLOWER OF THE DIVINE LOVE IN THE DIVINE BIRTH (chap. iii. 11—18).—In verse 10 St. John showed the necessary connection between righteousness and love; there is no contradiction between the two: the one is necessary to the other. Justice will become sternness without love; love will

doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

⁽¹¹⁾ For this is the message ¹ that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ⁽¹²⁾ Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his

10r. commandment.

brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

⁽¹³⁾ Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

⁽¹⁴⁾ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the

be weakness without justice. The two thoughts are introduced and connected in both halves of the Epistles. (See chap. ii. 3—11.) Here the duty of love is still more strongly insisted on, as the general subject is the love of God, as in the first half of the Epistle it was the light of God. We have (*a*) the command or message of Christ; then (*b*) the contrast of Cain; then (*c*) the similar conduct of the world (a thought which had occurred before, in verse 1); then (*d*) the comfort of the connection between love and life, as contrasted with hatred and death; then (*e*) the identification of the hater with the murderer, and the impossibility of associating the idea of eternal life with the destroyer of temporal life; then (*f*) the example of God's love in the death of the Son, urging us even to the same extremity of self-sacrifice; then, (*g*) as a minor premiss, the thought thrust home, for a practical conclusion, that the smaller self-sacrifice of daily assistance to others is an essential to the Christian life.

(4 *a*.) ⁽¹¹⁾ **For** states the reason why brotherly love was added to righteousness at the end of the last paragraph: because it was the earliest and most prominent fea-

ture of Christianity presented to them.

Love one another.—The injunction is perfectly general, without the restrictions of society; wherever Christian love is due, there it must immediately be paid. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 22.)

(4 *b*.) ⁽¹²⁾ **Not as Cain, who was of that . . .**—Rather, *Not as Cain was of that . . .*: an abrupt conversational form. (Comp. John vi. 58.) Cain is introduced as the prototype of envy, jealousy, and the inward hatred which the evil feel at the good.

(4 *c*.) ⁽¹³⁾ The conduct of the world to Christians is of a piece with this invariable characteristic of those who are in darkness, exemplified in Cain. (Comp. John xv. 18, 19; xvii. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 12.)

Marvel not is equivalent to "Be not dismayed; be of good courage."

(4 *d*.) ⁽¹⁴⁾ This is a characteristic instance of St. John's logic. From the terseness and pregnancy of his style, he does not give all the steps of an argument, but frequently turns it upside down, in order more speedily to bring out a forcible spiritual truth. But for this he would have written, "We love the brethren, because we have passed

brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

(15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

(16) Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

(17) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his

from death unto life; but he that abideth in death loveth not." But wishing to put these ideas in the form of a direct encouragement, in face of a hating world, he puts the reason as the conclusion, and the conclusion as the reason. This unexpected turn rivets the attention far more than a rigid deduction. Another ground of assurance has been stated in chap. ii. 2: keeping the behests of Christ, of which (as we have seen) love is the most prominent. "The brothers" means all the members of the human family: the love of Christ which, in verse 16, we are bidden to imitate, was for the whole world of sinners. (Comp. Matt. v. 44; 1 Cor. iv. 12.)

Passed from death unto life.—This dates from the beginning of the new birth, the dawn of eternal life in the converted heart. And just as the perfect Christian love embraces all other Christian virtues, so not only does actual hatred, but the absence of love, indicate absolute spiritual deadness.

(4 e.) (15) Regarding the absence of love as of one class with the presence of hatred, St. John here puts more prominently forward the active member of the class than the quiescent. The statement is intended as an illustration of the fact that where no love is there can

neither be eternal life. The full argument would be "Where love is not, there is hatred; where hatred is, there is murder; where murder is, there can be no eternal life." (Comp. Matt. v. 21—26.)

(4 f) (16) **Hereby perceive we the love of God.**—Rather, *Hereby know we the true love*; meaning, of course, that perfection of love which is God Himself. Christ, the Word made flesh, is regarded as identical with this love, so only the pronoun is used. The highest proof of love is the sacrifice of that which is most precious: nothing could be more precious than the life of the Word made flesh. (Comp. John x. 11, 15, 17, 18; xiii. 37, 38; xv. 13; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25.)

For us.—Rather, *on our behalf*. (See Rom. v. 8.)

And we ought.—The reason of this consequence is that we are to be like Christ in everything; as our being is orb'd in His, so whatever was His spirit will be ours: even His unparalleled act of self-sacrifice must be reproduced in us, at however great a distance. For the good of our fellows we must be even ready to die. (Comp. John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 13; Rom. ix. 3; xvi. 3, 4.)

(4 g) (17) **But** implies a progress from the greater duty to the less; if the less is neglected, far more

brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God

in him? ⁽¹⁸⁾ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

completely is the command disobeyed.

World is not here used in a bad sense, but merely of such elements of existence as are not spiritual.

Good.—Rather, *sustenance*, or “necessaries of life.”

The word “see” is strong, and implies calm and attentive contemplation.

The word translated “bowels of compassion” is used in the LXX. (Prov. xii. 10) for “tender mercies.” It is used in the New Testament as we use “heart,” and has nothing to do with bowels. It should be translated “compassion.”

How dwelleth.—In verse 15 it was eternal life; here St. John thinks of our love to God as one of the two chief signs and products of eternal life: eternal life bringing into activity its relation to its source.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The words “My little children” are, as usual, a mark of a sudden access of warmth, tenderness, and earnestness. “Word,” of course, is antithetical to “deed,” “tongue” to “truth.” The construction of the first pair (which is different from that of the second) implies merely the instruments of the love; that of the second implies its whole condition. St. John hints that there is some danger of this conventionality among his friends, and earnestly exhorts them to genuineness. He forbids all the traitorous babble of heartless insincerity, and urges that just, active, straightforward, all-em-

bracing affection which was complete in Christ alone. (Comp. Rom. xii. 9; Eph. iv. 15; Jas. ii. 15--17; 1 Pet. i. 22; 2 John, verse 1; 3 John, verse 1.)

(5) THE GLORIOUS RESULTS OF GOD'S LOVE REALISED THROUGH THE SONSHIP (verses 19--24).

(a) *The comfort of assurance* (verses 19--21).

(b) *The grant of our requests* (verse 22).

(c) *The presence of God* (verse 23).

(d) *The gift of the Spirit* (verse 24).

The style of St. John is so much the opposite of rhetorical, that the transitions are very gradual, and the paragraphs melt one into another. Here the reality and sincerity of the brotherly love which he has been urging reminds him of one happy consequence of it: that it convinces us of the truth of our profession and of the deep security of our relation to God. If we love as God loves, then our hearts need not fear. This immediately suggests, by way of contrast, the wholesome thought that, if our heart does condemn us, we ought very seriously to repent, because God is a far more accurate and searching Judge. Moving on, however, from the idea of confidence, St. John next dwells on the happy consequence of keeping God's commandments and doing what is pleasing in His sight, as we can do

(19) And hereby we know
that we are of
the truth, and
shall assure¹
our hearts be-
fore him.

Chap. iii. 19—24.
Glorious results
of sonship:
Chap. iii. 19—21.
(a) Assurance.

¹ Gr. *persuade*.

(20) For if our heart con-
demn us, God is greater
than our heart, and know-
eth all things. (21) Beloved,
if our heart condemn us
not, *then* have we confi-

when we are really His sons: and that is, the certainty that, in one way or another, according to His will, all our prayers will be answered. Then, lest there should be any mistake about the nature of God's commandments, he puts them in their simplest form: belief in the revealer of His will for theory, brotherly love for practice. This brings forward another result of being enabled to keep His commandments: the presence of God in the Christian, and the life of the Christian in God. Lastly, if we ask how we are to be sure of this presence, we are led to what may be regarded as the fourth consequence of sonship: the demonstrable transformation of all our aims and thoughts by the silent working of the Divine Spirit. Thus, although St. John did not set out intending to lay down these four results, they stand out evident from the rest of the train of thought.

(5 a.) (19) Hereby refers to what precedes in verse 18. "And" is best omitted. For "we know," read, *shall we know*.

Are of the truth.—That we have our foundation in, and draw our life from, the truth—that we belong to its kingdom. "The truth" means all of the eternal nature, purpose, and will of God which it concerns us to know—revealed in Christ, brought home by the Spirit, exemplified in Christian lives. "The heart" means the affections

(comp. John xiv. 1, 27; xvi. 6, 22); the seat of the moral feelings, as distinct from the intellect; the emotional side of the moral nature, of which the intellectual side was called by St. Paul "the conscience." (Comp. Acts xxiv. 16; Rom. ii. 15; ix. 1; xiii. 5; 1 Cor. viii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 11.) The construction here is more disputed than that of any other passage in the Epistle. There are five ways of taking it:—

- (i.) Shall assure our hearts before Him; because, if our heart condemn us, it is because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- (ii.) Shall assure our hearts before Him, whereinsoever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- (iii.) Shall persuade our hearts before Him that, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- (iv.) Shall assure our hearts before him; for, if our heart condemn us, God, since He is greater than our heart, knows all things.
- (v.) As in the text.

The fifth makes the best sense, and is far more like St. John's usual style, with the statement, the contrast, and the statement repeated in a stronger form; but it

dence toward God. ⁽²²⁾ And
whatsoever

Chap. iii. 22. (b)
Grant of re-
quests.

we ask, we re-
ceive of him,
because we

keep his commandments,
and do those things that
are pleasing in his sight.

⁽²³⁾ And this is his com-
mandment, That we should

believe on the name of
his Son Jesus Christ, and
love one another, as he gave
us commandment. ⁽²⁴⁾ And

he that keep-
eth his com-
mandments
dwelleth in

Chap. iii. 24. (c)
Presence of God;
(d) and gift of
the Spirit.

him, and he in him. And
hereby we know that he

is obliged to consider one of the words—the second “that” or the second “because,” as in (i.) a redundant repetition. The bias of the reader will probably be turned to one or other of these renderings, according as he holds “greater” to mean “more searching” or “more merciful.” The former is necessary if we consider verse 20 a contrast, after the manner of St. John.

(5 b.) *The grant of requests the second result of this near relation to God* (verses 22, 23).

⁽²²⁾ **Whatsoever we ask.**—If this sounds unlimited, we should remember that it is said of us in our character as children of God; as far as that is true of us, we cannot ask anything contrary to His will. (Comp. John xvi. 23, 24.) Our prayers are heard through the merits of Christ; but if we do not keep the commands of God, if (still more positively) we make no attempt to do what is pleasing in His sight, prayer must be fruitless. The fact is that, unless there is such a moral result in ourselves, our faith has not laid hold of Christ's merits, is dead, and is no true faith at all.

⁽²³⁾ **And this . . .**—The sum of God's commandments, and the compendium of the life that pleases

Him, is stated shortly in two spiritual facts indissolubly connected—(a) belief on the Name; (b) brotherly love. Belief is the root of the matter, because the recognition of Jesus as Messiah is the essential foundation of the Christian fellowship. (Comp. Gal. v. 6—14; and 1 Tim. i. 5.)

(5 c.) *The mutual indwelling of the Father and His redeemed sons the third result of the Adoption.* (Comp. chaps. i. 3; ii. 6, 24, 28; iv. 13.) St. John is not thinking specially of any Person of the Deity.

(5 d.) *The solid proof of the indwelling, and therefore the Sonship, is the demonstrable presence of the Spirit* (end of verse 24).

Hitherto the thoughts have been chiefly about the Father and the Son where any direct reference was made to Persons in the Trinity. Here the Divine Spirit comes into prominence; formerly He had only been alluded to in the anointing (chap. ii. 20, 26; comp. Rom. viii. 15; xv. 19; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Gal. iv. 6; 1 Thess. i. 5).

The mention of faith in verse 23 suggests to St. John the necessity of a still further discussion of truth and error, lest it should be thought that all religious fervour is of the truth. The mention of the Spirit

abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

CHAPTER IV.—⁽¹⁾ Beloved, believe not every

After
A.D. 90.

spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets

Chap. iv. 1—6.
Duty of trying
the spirits.

enables him to make the transition distinctly, and he treats of the various phases of religious life, true and false, under the corresponding name of spirits.

IV.

(6) NOT ALL SPIRITS ARE THE RESULT OF THE SONSHIP: NECESSITY OF EXAMINING THEM (chap. iv. 1—6).

(a) *The difference among spirits* (verse 1).

(b) *The measure* (verses 2, 3).

(c) *The encouragement* (verse 4).

(d) *The condemnation* (verse 5).

(e) *Inference and conclusion* (verse 6).

The mention of faith in chap. iii. 23 had reminded St. John of the danger of intellectual, as well as of moral error. The mention of God's Spirit at the conclusion of the last paragraph gave him a form in which to clothe the discussion of truth and falsehood in its human manifestations. By "spirits" he means those tendencies towards good and evil (here especially with regard to thought and opinion) which may be considered as coming from the supreme power of God, on the one hand, and from the inferior power of the devil, on the other. Into the question what these influences are, whether, like the Holy Spirit, they are personal or not, he does not enter. Where one quality, or opinion, shows itself

in different individuals, he identifies it and calls it a spirit. Religious fervour might take a form quite antagonistic to the real will and law of God. For Christians there was but one standard by which to measure all claims on their religious allegiance: confession that the man Christ Jesus was the Word. All that demurred to that plain fact, and the loyalty implied by it, belonged to the spirit of antichrist. His hearers, however, if he understood them rightly, need not fear. By virtue of their adherence to the truth, God was in them. In Him they had conquered the spirits of the world, and had but to claim their victory. The false teachers might be known, and must be condemned by the savour of the world that was in their method and their message, and by their popularity with what was opposed to God. The Apostles and those who taught with them could confidently before God put forward the grand claim that theirs was the spirit that came from Him, because they had held undeviatingly to the truth as manifested in Jesus.

(6 a) ⁽¹⁾ **Beloved.**—Whenever St. John uses this word, he has a strong and earnest exhortation in hand. (Comp. chap. iii. 2—21; verse 7.)

Try the spirits.—Comp. 1 Cor. x. 15; xi. 13; xii. 10; Eph. v. 10; 1 Thess. v. 21. It is most important to notice that this

are gone out into the world. ⁽²⁾ Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ⁽³⁾ and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of

antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. ⁽⁴⁾ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. ⁽⁵⁾ They are of the world: therefore speak

examination of truth and error is inculcated on all alike, not merely on an ordained and materially separate class.

Prophets, in the New Testament, preach rather than predict. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 1—4, 24; Eph. iv. 11.)

Are gone out into the world, either "from us," or else "have appeared in order to give their message." (Comp. John vi. 14; xvi. 28; xviii. 37.)

(6 *b.*) Comp. 1 Cor. xii. 3. The real humanity of the Saviour is the truth here specially emphasised.

⁽²⁾ **Jesus Christ** is taken to imply all His history. (Comp. chap. iii. 23, and verse 6.)

Come is used of Christ in St. John's language for His mission and manifestation. (Comp. John v. 43; vi. 14; vii. 28, 29; viii. 42; xvi. 28; xviii. 37.)

⁽³⁾ **Every spirit that confesseth not.**—There is a curious old reading mentioned by Socrates, the historian, viz., "every spirit that destroyeth" (or, *dissolveth*) "Jesus Christ." It is, however, evidently a gloss, written against the Gnostics, which crept into the text. It is clear that this verse

presupposes an evangelistic presentation of Christ before refusal to confess His historical person could be made. (Comp. chap. ii. 18.)

(6 *c.*) This consolation is in the same manner as that in chap. ii. 12, and is introduced by the same endearing phrase. He is sure they have held to the truth, and have the Sonship. (Comp. chap. iii. 1, 2, 13, 14.) God is in them, and therefore the victory is already theirs. Although they may still have to struggle, they have only to claim Christ's strength, and they have won. In making their choice between light and darkness, love and hate, good and evil, God and the devil, they became of the victorious party.

⁽⁴⁾ **Them**—*i.e.*, the antichrists, the false prophets, the spirits that are not of God. (Comp. chap. ii. 13, 14.)

He that is in the world—*i.e.*, "the prince of this world," the devil.

(6 *d.*) As usual, a contrast. The reason of their success is at once their distinguishing mark and their condemnation. (Comp. John viii. 37, 43, 47; xviii. 37.)

⁽⁵⁾ **Hearing them.**—This implies listening with attention and pleasure.

they of the world, and
the world heareth them.

(6) We are of God: he that
knoweth God heareth us;

he that is not of God
heareth not us. Hereby
know we the spirit of
truth, and the spirit of

(6 c.) (6) **We are of God.**—The first side of the antithesis repeated, after St. John's manner, with a difference, *we* being substituted for *ye*, and meaning "the Apostles and those who taught with them." St. John feels the grave duty, in condemnation of Cerinthus and other opponents, to assert the genuine truth and divine authority of the apostolic gospel. There could be no spiritual pride in this; it was a conscientious obligation. God spoke in them, and their loyalty forbade alike disclaimer and accommodation. (Com. John xviii. 37.) When heretics said, "Christ ought to have said this or that," the Apostles had only to reply, "But He did not say it."

Hereby know we.—The criterion here is much the same as in verses 2 and 3, but regarded from a different point of view: attention to false innovators, or faithful adherence to the Jesus Christ of history.

(7) **THE PERFECT LOVE THE SUREST TEST** (chap. iv. 7—21).

(a) *Fraternal love the necessary product of the true knowledge of God, because God is love* (verses 7, 8).

(b) *The grand recent historical exhibition of God's love* (verses 9, 10).

(c) *Our consequent duty* (verse 11).

(d) *God's abode in us, the perfecting of his love in us, and the proof of His pre-*

sence through the Spirit, are the equivalent for seeing him (verses 12, 13).

(e) *All this is grounded on the strong, undeniable truth of the Apostolic witness to Christ* (verses 14, 15, 16).

(f) *The fearlessness which is the result of perfect love* (verses 17, 18).

(g) *The cause of our love to God, and the necessary connection of that love with love to our fellows* (verses 19, 20, 21).

This may be considered the central portion of the second half of the Epistle. Nothing could be more significant of St. John's teaching. Here many trains of thought which have occurred before are gathered together in one grand treatise on love, divine and human—the complement of the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The thought of (a) was suggested, though not in so complete and concise a form, in chaps. iii. 10, 11, 23, ii. 4, and iii. 6; that of (b) in chaps. iii. 16, and ii. 2; that of (c) also in chap. iii. 16; that of (d) in chaps. ii. 5, and iii. 24; that of (e) in chap. i. 1, 2; that of (f) in chap. ii. 28; that of (g) in chaps. ii. 4, and iii. 17. The connection with the paragraph on the trial of the spirits is very obvious: "every one that loveth is born of God;" so that the quality

error. ⁽⁷⁾ Beloved, let us
 love one
 Chap. iv. 7-21. another: for
 The test seen in love. Treatise love is of
 on love. God; and

every one that loveth is
 born of God, and knoweth
 God. ⁽⁸⁾ He that loveth
 not knoweth not God; for
 God is love. ⁽⁹⁾ In this

and quantity of our affection will be the best gauge whether we have the spirit of truth or of error. The absence of love is ignorance of God, for real knowledge of Him imparts His nature. And if any ask how we know of His love, the answer is that it was seen in His Son. In sending Him, He loved us without any love on our part. Our relation to God reminds us that we must have the same love to each other. The fact that God cannot be seen is an additional reason for mutual affection among us; for brotherly love is the demonstrable proof of His presence, and of the growing completeness of the work wrought by His love in us. The Spirit Himself, through whom our love would come, confirms the reality of God's indwelling. And these spiritual emotions and developments are not illusory, for they are guaranteed by the ocular and oral evidence of the Apostles to the historical Person of Christ. So the result of all this will be perfect and fearless confidence. To sum up (verse 19): our love to God springs from His to us; hatred of our brother (or the absence of love for him) is the denial of all love for God; and for this duty we rest not on our own deductions only, however true, but on his plain command.

(7a.) ⁽⁷⁾ One another.—As God loved the world, so we are to love mankind, not merely Christians. (Comp. chap. iii. 13.)

For love is of God.—He who is truly alive shares the life of God, which is love. All true love is part of His being.

⁽⁸⁾ **Knoweth not.**—Rather, *never knew*. Real knowledge of God has a convincing practical effect; without such an effect it is not knowledge, but a mere mental deception.

God is love.—In the early part of the Epistle St. John had defined God as light, and the thoughts had been grouped round and in relation to that central idea. It would of course be impossible ever to exhaust all the definitions of God; but just as our nature may be roughly classified as intellectual and moral, mind and heart, thought and emotion, so, when we have thought of God as Light (embracing all such attributes as truth, knowledge, purity, health, power, and justice), we shall not have traversed in outline all that we can know of His nature, or all that concerns us to know, until we have also thought of Him as Love, the author and source of all true affection, kindness, pity, friendliness, rejoicing in the creation of infinite life for the sake of its infinite happiness, and offering eternal bliss to all His human family, that He may be for ever surrounded by inexhaustible illustrations of the joy and glory of perfection.

(7 b.) ⁽⁹⁾ **In this was manifested.**—St. John echoes his beloved Lord (from John iii. 16).

was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

⁽¹¹⁾ Beloved, if God so loved

us, we ought also to love one another. ⁽¹²⁾ No man hath seen God at

any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. ⁽¹³⁾ Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath

In us.—(Comp. John ix. 3.) "In our case."

Only begotten.—In contrast to us, His adopted sons.

That we might live.—Human life is regarded as no true living, but a mere existence, until "Christ be formed in the heart" and we become "partakers of the divine nature."

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Herein is love.**—What love is this, that, distasteful, uncongenial, unloving, unlovely as we must have been in His sight, He did this great thing for us! (Comp. John xv. 16; Rom. v. 8, 10; Tit. iii. 4.) On *Propitiation*, see chaps. ii. 2, and iii. 16.

^(7 c) ⁽¹¹⁾ **Beloved.**—An impulse moves St. John's mind corresponding to that in verse 7.

We ought.—As God has bestowed his affection so gratuitously on us, and we benefit by it in such an inconceivable degree, and can make Him no return, we can only *pay the debt* by bestowing **our** poor equivalent on our fellow-men. Although our happiness depends strictly on God, still He has allowed us to be stewards for Him in some small degree for the happiness of those about us.

^(7 d.) ⁽¹²⁾ **No man . . .**—St. John quotes his Gospel (chap. i. 18). This is simply the general proposition, "God is invisible," and has no reference to spiritual sight. (Comp. Ex. xxxiii. 20; John vi. 46; 1 Tim. vi. 16). The appearances of God to Abraham or Moses would be like the Shechinah in the Temple, but no material glimpse of Him who is a Spirit. St. John mentions the fact as an admission of the limits of human nature and the condition of faith, but only in order to state the richness of the substitute that has been provided, which is the presence of God within the soul, verified and substantiated by the historical Person of Christ.

His love is perfected in us.—Its operation in us has full scope and sway.

⁽¹³⁾ **Hereby know we.**—Comp. chap. iii. 24.

^(7 e.) A second antithesis to the opening words of verse 12. The Apostolic witness to the person of Christ is again and again insisted on as the foundation of Christian theology. (Comp. chap. i. 1—3; John i. 14; Acts iv. 20; xxii. 15; xxvi. 16.)

given us of his Spirit.

(14) And we have seen and do testify that

Chap. iv. 14—16. the Father
The ground.

sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. (15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

¹ Gr. *love with us.*

(16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (17) Herein is our love¹ made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day

Chap. iv. 17, 18.
The consequence.

(14) Saviour of the world.—Comp. chap. ii. 2.

(15) Whosoever shall confess—*i.e.*, receives the Apostolic witness as beyond dispute. (Comp. chap. ii. 23, and verse 6; Rom. x. 9.) The noble width of this declaration is most remarkable, in opposition to human inventions of narrow and sectarian communions.

Son of God, in the sense of "only begotten," as in verse 9.

(16) And we have known and believed.—This has the effect of a reflective repetition of verse 14, "Yes, we have known and believed." This time, however, the "we" includes those who have heard and accepted the testimony of the eye-witnesses.

God is love.—In this meditative recapitulation St. John cannot help summing up everything again in the boundless formula of verse 8. Knowledge is here the process that leads to conviction; belief, the result of conviction.

He that dwelleth in love.—St. John's whole purpose is none other than to raise man to his highest possible development by demonstrating the reality and nature of fellowship with the Divine. Here he arrives at the very central position of all: that as God is Love

itself, so he that allows nothing to trouble that atmosphere of pure love (here neither specially towards God or man) which God would enable him to breathe, if his own wilfulness did not turn him away from it, will be bathed in the light of God, animated with His life, and one with Him. It is a combination of verses 8 and 15.

Us has the same width as verse 15.

(7 f.) (17) Herein is our love made perfect.—Rather, *In this love is perfected with us.* "Love," as in verse 16, is the disposition to be attracted towards what is worthy of sympathy, whether it be God or man.

That we may have boldness.—The day of judgment, whether near or remote, is regarded as so certain that it is a present fact influencing our conduct. Love will be more or less perfect in us in proportion as it gives us more or less just and reasonable grounds for confidence were we suddenly placed before the great white throne. (Comp. chap. ii. 28.)

Because as he is, so are we in this world.—If we live in this serene atmosphere of pure sympathy with God and man, Christ is in us and we in Him,

of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ⁽¹⁸⁾ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. ⁽¹⁹⁾ We

love him, because he first loved us. ⁽²⁰⁾ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath

Chap. iv. 19—21.
The cause of love to God and the brother.

because God is Love itself. Sharing His nature, therefore, we must be like Him, and the more completely we allow this Divine love towards our Father and our brothers to transform our whole being, the more we shall be like our Judge, and the less cause we shall have for dread.

In this world merely indicates our present place of habitation.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **There is no fear.**—The more perfect this disposition of serene sympathy becomes, the less share can any form of anxiety have in it. Even if regarded as directed to an earthly object, if it be pure and divine in its character, not even want of reciprocity can disturb its equanimity. Where it is a well-grounded sympathy with a perfect being, its serenity is all the more complete in proportion to its sincerity. When love is perfect, fear dwindles to nothing, is absolutely expelled. Love, seeking to be perfect, and finding fear alongside of it, will diligently seek out the cause of the fear, perfect itself by getting rid of the cause, and so get rid of the fear. Fear in such a connection implies some ground for alarm, and suffers punishment (not "torment") by anticipation. The presence of such a ground for alarm would imply a proportionate

imperfection of love. (Comp. chap. iii. 19—21.)

(7 g.) *The cause of our love to God, and the necessary connection of that love with love to our fellows* (verses 19—21).

⁽¹⁹⁾ **We love him, because he first loved us.**—God's loving us made it possible for us to love Him: otherwise we should not have known Him, or had the faculty of loving Him even had we known Him. To suppose that St. John is putting a mere case of gratitude is to rob him of the dignity and depth of his meaning.

⁽²⁰⁾ These last three verses are a recapitulation, in a vivid form, of the truth and the duty contained in verses 10, 11. God made it possible for us to love Him, and the very first result of our feeling this power within us, and allowing it to put itself into force will be seen in pure and devout sympathy for all whom we can help. As usual, hating, and not loving, are put as interchangeable members of the class of malevolence. St. John argues on the ground that it is much easier for human nature to be interested by what comes before its eyes than by that about which it has to think. Gregory the Great says, "In love the eyes are guides;" and Ecumenius, "Sight leads on to love."

seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

(21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

After
A.D. 90.

CHAPTER V.—⁽¹⁾Who-
soever be-
lieveth that
Jesus is the
Christ is born
of God: and every one

Chap. v. 1—12.
The test: Power
of faith (1—5).

(Comp. chaps. ii. 4; iii. 17; and verse 12.)

(21) However this may be, there is a still stronger position: the simple command of God in Christ. (Comp. Luke x. 27; John xiii. 34, 35; xiv. 21; xv. 9, 10, 12.)

V.

(8.) FAITH THE TEST OF LOVE (chap. v. 1—12).

(a) *Its power* (verses 1—5).

(b) *The evidence on which it rests* (verses 6—10).

(c) *What it contains* (verses 11, 12).

(8 a.) St. John has been setting love in the supreme place which it held in our Lord's teaching and in St. Paul's. But there is another faculty which has to regulate, purify, direct, and stir up our weak and imperfect loving, and that is, faith. Without faith we cannot be certain about the quality of our love. He begins very simply with a position already laid down: genuine faith in Christ is the genuine birth from God. From that faith, through that birth, will come the proper love, as in a family: the love of our spiritual brothers and sisters. (This is specially sympathy with real Christians; but it does not exclude the more general love before inculcated.) If we are doubtful about the quality of our love, or are not

sure whether any earthly elements may be mingled with it, we have only to ask ourselves whether we are loving God and keeping His commandments: the true work of faith. The love of God does, indeed, actually consist in keeping His commandments (and none can complain that they are tyrannical, vexatious, or capricious). The very object of the divine birth is the conquest of all that is opposed to God and to His commandments, and the instrument of the conquest is faith. There can be no victory over these elements that are opposed to God, and, consequently, no pure, true, God-like love, except through faith.

(8 b.) Having left the discussion about the effect of faith on love with the same thought which began it—belief in Jesus Christ—he is led to state the grounds on which that faith rests. These are here stated to be three: water, or Christ's baptism, symbolising the complete fulfilment of the Law in His own perfect purity, and thus appealing to the Old Testament; blood, or His meritorious cross and passion, symbolising His own special work of atonement and reconciliation; and the Spirit, embracing all those demonstrable proofs of His kingdom which were from day to day forcing themselves on the attention of believers. If we accept human testimony on proper grounds, far more should we receive **this** divine

that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. ⁽²⁾ By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. ⁽³⁾ For this is the love of God,

that we keep his commandments : and his commandments are not grievous. ⁽⁴⁾ For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

testimony of God to His Son—the witness of the Old Testament, of the work of Christ, and of the Spirit. This witness is not far to seek, for it is actually within the true believer.

(8 c.) The contents of the record which God has thus given us are at once most simple and most comprehensive : the gift of eternal life in His Son. The presence of the Word of God in the heart is the sole condition of life.

(8 a.) ⁽¹⁾ **Whosoever believeth . . .**—What may be the works of God among those who have not heard of His Son we do not here inquire. Enough that those who have this privilege are sons if they accept the message.

Begotten.—Of those who have the new birth, in a general sense : quite distinct from “only-begotten.”

⁽²⁾ **By this we know . . .**—Love and obedience to God will assure us of the truth of our love to others. In chaps. ii. 3 and iv. 20, 21, obedience to God and love to our fellows were the signs of knowledge of God and love to Him. The two are really inseparable. If love of God is absent, then our love of our fellows is not genuine—is earthly, is a mockery. If love of our fellows is absent, then we have no love for God. All friendship

must be tested by loyalty to God ; all love to Him must be tested by charity.

⁽³⁾ **For this is . . .**—These words are introduced to show that what were treated as two separate qualities in the last verse are in reality the same thing.

And his commandments are not grievous.—A transitional thought, introduced for encouragement, and forming a bridge to the next statement. (Comp. Matt. xi. 30.) God has commanded us nothing for His own sake, but everything for our own highest profit and happiness. Were we perfect, we should not find them commands at all, for they would be our natural impulses. The more sincerely we serve God, the more enjoyment we shall derive from them. Only to those whose inclinations are distorted, perverted, and corrupted by sin can God's laws seem irksome.

⁽⁴⁾ The difficulty experienced by some in keeping God's commands arises from the influence of all that is opposed to Him in our surroundings. But he who is born of God—the true child of God—fights with this only as a conqueror, because as far as he is born again, God is in him. God overcame the world in Christ, and is still ever conquering through

(5) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (6) This is

he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; Chap. v. 6.—10. Evidence.
not by water

Him in His sons: so that to such the commands are congenial. (Comp. chaps. iii. 9; iv. 4; John xvi. 33.)

And this is the victory . . .—A new thought, suitable to the tenor of the passage, which lays down that faith is the measure of love. As the conquest that is overcoming the world is wrought by human instruments, its agent may be regarded as our faith, which appropriates Christ's work, and carries it out for Him and through Him. (Comp. chaps. ii. 13, 14, 23; iv. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.)

(5) **Who is he that overcometh?**—An appeal to the consciousness of Christians. If there be any besides the disciples of Jesus who have vanquished all that is opposed to God, where are they? God has declared that He will not harshly judge the Pagan world (Rom. ii. 13, 15); but salvation by uncovenanted mercies is a very different thing from the glories of the illuminated and victorious Christian heart. Where are they? Not Socrates, with his want of the sense of sin and his tolerance of evil; not Cicero, with his tormenting vanity; not the Gnostics, with their questionable lives: only those in whom had dawned the bright and morning Star.

(8 b.) (6) **This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.**—"Water" and "blood" are referred to as two of the three great witnesses, or sets

of evidence, for Christ. They are symbols, and look back to two of the most characteristic and significant acts of His personal history. The one is His baptism, the other His cross. Why His baptism? The baptism of John was the seal of the Law. It was the outward sign by which those who repented at his preaching showed their determination to keep the Law no longer in the letter only, but also in the spirit. Jesus, too, showed this determination. Baptism in water was His outward sign and seal to the Old Testament: that He had not come to destroy, but to fulfil the Law; not to supersede the prophecies, but to claim them. It was to show that in Him the righteousness and purification which the Law intended was to be a reality, and through Him to be the law of His kingdom. Thus it pointed to all the evidence which the Old Testament could possibly afford Him; and, through the Old Testament, it pointed to the dispensation of the Father. Thus, when this most symbolic act was complete, the Almighty Giver of the old Law or covenant was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"Blood," in the same way, refers to the special work of Christ Himself—the work of reconciliation and atonement by His death and passion, the realisation of all that the sacrifices and types of the former state of religion had meant. That He was the true sacrifice was

only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

(7) For there are three that

bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness

proved by the perfection of His life, by the signs and wonders with which He had attracted and convinced His followers, by the fulfilment of prophecy, by the marvels of His teaching, by the amazing events which had happened at the different crises of His life, by His resurrection and ascension, and by the confession of all who knew Him well that He was the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth, and with the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.

Not by water only.—John the Baptist might have been said to come by water only: he came preaching the washing away of the personal results of sin through turning again to the truth and spirit of the Law; Jesus came by blood also, for His sacrifice atoned for sin as rebellion against God.

And it is the Spirit that beareth witness.—The Holy Spirit had descended on Jesus at His baptism, had proved Him to be the Son of God in every word and act of His life, had raised Him up on the third day, and glorified His body till it could no longer be seen on earth. He had made new men of His disciples on the Day of Pentecost, had laid far and wide the foundations of the new kingdom, and was daily demonstrating Himself in the renewed life in all parts of the world. (Comp. Matt. iii. 16; John i. 32, 33; iii. 34; Rom. i. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 18.)

Because the Spirit is truth.

—Rather, *the truth*; the sum and substance of God's revelation in all its fulness regarded as personally proceeding from the divine throne, teaching the prophets their message, accompanying the Son on His human pilgrimage, and bringing all things afterwards to the remembrance of His disciples.

(7) For the reasons why this verse cannot be retained in the text, see the *Introduction*.

(8) The text of this verse is properly, *For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.* It is a repetition of verse 6 for the purpose of emphasis. The fact that the three that bear witness are in the masculine gender bears out the interpretation given of verse 6; that they imply the Holy Spirit, the author of the Law, and the author of Redemption. It also explains how verse 7 crept in as a gloss.

And these three agree in one.—Literally, *make for the one*. The old dispensation, of which the Baptist's preaching was the last message, had no other meaning than the preparation for the Messiah; the sacrifice of Calvary was the consummation of the Messiah's mission; the kingdom of the Spirit, starting from that mission, was the seal of it. The three witnesses to Christ have their counterparts in the Christian soul: "baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good

in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood : and these three agree in one.

⁽⁹⁾ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which he

hath testified of his Son.

⁽¹⁰⁾ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record

conscience toward God ;” “the blood of Christ purging our conscience from dead works to serve the living God,” and “the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

⁽⁹⁾ **If we receive the witness of men.**—Any human testimony, provided it is logically binding on our understandings, to establish common facts or to prove opinions. (Comp. Deut. xvii. 6 ; xix. 15 ; Matt. xviii. 16 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 1 ; Heb. x. 28, 29.)

The witness of God is greater.—Any message that clearly comes from God is to be accepted by us with a readiness infinitely greater than in the case of mere human testimony. St. John considers the three-fold witness from God to convey a certainty which no human evidence could claim.

For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.—Such witness from God there is : for this three-fold testimony is what He has said to us about His Son. If any should doubt whether the carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth, was in reality God, St. John would refer them to the righteousness and predictions of the Law and the prophets all fulfilled, to the life and death of Christ which spoke for themselves, and to manifest inauguration of the

reign of the Spirit. Under these three heads would come all possible evidence for Christian truth.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.**—To the real believer the three-fold testimony of God no longer remains merely an outward object of thought to be contemplated and grasped : it has become part of his own nature. The three separate messages have each produced their proper result in him, and he can no more doubt them than he can doubt himself. The water has assured him that he is no longer under the Law, but under grace, and has taught him the necessity of the new birth unto righteousness (John iii. 5 ; Tit. iii. 5). The blood has shown him that he cannot face God unless his sins are forgiven ; and it has enabled him to feel that they are forgiven, that he is being daily cleansed, and that he has in himself the beginnings of eternal life (chaps. i. 7 ; ii. 2 ; John vi. 53). And the Spirit, which has had part in both these is daily making him grow in grace (Gal. v. 22 ; Eph. v. 9).

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.—The negative contrast, as usual, to strengthen the affirmative. St. John regards the evidence as so certain, that he to whom it is brought and who rejects it seems as if he was

that God gave of his Son.

⁽¹¹⁾ And this is the record,

Chap. v. 11, 12. that God hath
The contents of faith. given to us

eternal life, and this life
is in his Son. ⁽¹²⁾ He

that hath the Son hath
life; and he that hath

boldly asserting that what God had said was false. The sceptical reply that the message did not really come from God at all it is not St. John's purpose to consider; his object is to warn his friends of the real light in which they ought to regard the opponents of truth. There should be no complacent condoning; from the point of view of the Christians themselves, such unbelievers were throwing the truth back in God's face.

(8 c.) *What faith contains* (verses 11, 12).

⁽¹¹⁾ **This is the record.**—This is the substance of the witness of God. The Christian creed is here reduced to a very small compass: the gift of eternal life and the dependence of that life upon His Son. Eternal life does not here mean the mere continuance of life after death, whether for good or evil; it is the expression used throughout St. John's writings for that life in God, thought of without reference to time, which can have no end, which implies heaven and every possible variety of blessedness, and which consists in believing in God the Father and in His Son. Its opposite is not annihilation, but the second death: existence in exclusion from God. (Comp. chap. ii. 25; John xvii. 3; 2 Tim. i. 10.)

⁽¹²⁾ **He that hath the Son hath life.**—The emphatic word here is "hath." As this sentence is addressed to the faithful, there is no need to say "the Son of God." "Having the Son" is His dwell-

ing in the heart by faith: a conscious difference to human life which transforms its whole character. "Having life" is the birth of the new man within which can never die.

He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—As this is contemplating unbelievers, the words "of God" are added to show them what they have lost.

[4. The Conclusion (chap. v. 13—21).

(1) **FRESH STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF WRITING**, equivalent to that at the beginning of the Epistle, but differing from it (verse 13).

(2) **WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT COME UP TO THE STANDARD ASSUMED THROUGHOUT THE EPISTLE** (verses 14—17).

(3) **SOME PRACTICAL POINTS RECAPITULATED** (verses 18—20).

(a) *God's sons do not sin* (verse 18);

(b) *Personal assurance that we are God's sons* (verse 19);

(c) *Personal assurance that Christ is come, of the gift of the spiritual sense, and of abiding in the God of Truth through His Son* (verse 20);

(4) **LAST WARNING** (verse 21).]

St. John, thinking perhaps of

not the Son of God hath not
 life. ⁽¹³⁾ These things have
 I written unto you that be-
 lieve on the name of the

Chap. v. 13—21.
 The conclusion
 and recapitula-
 tion.

Son of God; that ye may
 know that ye have eternal
 life, and that ye may be-
 lieve on the name of the
 Son of God. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And this
 is the confidence that we

the close of his Gospel, where he states the same purpose (John xx. 31), and reminded by verse 11 of the supreme importance of having eternal life, and of the necessity of finding this in the Son, sums up the object of his Letter in these two ideas. He tells his friends again that he writes to them because they believe on the name of the Son of God, and explains his wish to be that, by the thoughts which he has put before them, they may feel certain that the eternal life which ought to be theirs is theirs already, and that their belief may not cease, but may be really vital. Thinking then of those who would be deceiving themselves if they pretended to any such hopeful assurance, he reminds the faithful of the power of prayer. Beginning with the general statement that confidence in God means that He hears us, he goes on to show that hearing must imply that our petitions are granted; and next, that it would be a petition quite in accordance with God's will, and therefore likely to be heard, if a believer were to pray for a sinning brother. At the same time it must be recollected that there is such a state of wilful, hard-hearted rebellion that it is past praying for. Meantime they must remember again that as far as they were born of God they could not wilfully sin; that if they were what St. John thought them they had ample

proofs that they were of God, and must not forget that the whole world was corrupted; and that there could not be any doubt that the Son of God was come, and had given them the spiritual sense necessary to discerning the true God. In that true God they were, through His Son. The God of whom the Son had spoken was that true God, and to know Him as such in His Son was eternal life. The last request was, that they should strictly guard themselves against any appearance or tendency whatsoever which might claim their sympathy or allegiance apart from God.

(1) FRESH STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
 (verse 13).

⁽¹³⁾ Comp. John xx. 31. The expression here is more positive than in the Gospel: there, "that ye might believe, and that believing ye might have life;" here, "that ye may know that ye have." He wishes to produce in them a good hope. The specific object at the beginning of the Epistle was the communication of joy through fellowship with the Apostles; the knowledge of possessing eternal life and the continuance of their faith would be precisely that joy.

(2) WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT COME UP TO THE STANDARD ASSUMED (verses 14—17).

⁽¹⁴⁾ And this is the confidence.—The assurance intended

have in him,¹ that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ⁽¹⁵⁾ and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. ⁽¹⁶⁾ If any man see his brother sin a

¹ Or, concerning him.

sin *which is* not unto death he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. ⁽¹⁷⁾ All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto

in verse 13 implies confidence, and confidence means the conviction that God is not deaf to our prayers. But these must not be contrary to His will. The Lord's Prayer reminds us that the Person referred to here is the Father.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **That we have the petitions.**—The goodness of God as Light and Love is so fully established that if our petitions are according to His will it follows necessarily that He grants them.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death.**—Here are meant such stumblings as do not imply any distinct, wilful, deliberate severance from the faith of Christ. To divide sins, on the authority of this passage, into venial and mortal is to misunderstand the whole argument of the Epistle and to seduce the conscience. St. John only means that though prayer can do much for an erring brother, there is a wilfulness against which it would be quite powerless: for even prayer is not stronger than freewill. (Comp. chap. ii. 1; Luke xxii. 31, 32; John xvii. 9; Heb. vii. 25.)

And he shall give.—The interceding Christian is regarded as gaining life for the erring brother and handing it on to him.

There is a sin unto death.

—The limit of intercession is now given: such conscious and determined sin as shows a loss of all hold on Christ. Such a state would be a sign of spiritual death. Hardened obstinacy would be invincible; and as it would not be according to the will of God that prayers, by the nature of the case in vain, should be offered to Him, St. John thinks that intercession ought to stop here. At the same time, he is careful not categorically to forbid it; he only says that in such cases he does not recommend intercessory prayer. (Comp. Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 29; Heb. vi. 4, 6; x. 26, 27.) "His brother" is here, of course, a nominal Christian.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **All unrighteousness is sin.**—Here St. John reminds them that all Christians might, at one time or another, stand in need of intercessory prayer, even those who, on the whole, might be considered as "sinning not" (because their permanent will was against sin, and for holiness), because every declension from the perfect righteousness of God is error or sin. Nothing that was not hopelessly deliberate need be considered a sign of absolute spiritual death. (Comp. chap. iii. 4.)

death. ⁽¹⁸⁾ We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

⁽¹⁹⁾ And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. ⁽²⁰⁾ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an under-

(3) SOME PRACTICAL POINTS RECAPITULATED (verses 18—21).

(a) *God's sons do not sin* (verse 18).

St. John refers back to "that ye may know" in verse 13, and sums up three points from former portions of the Epistle, describing the true consciousness of the Christian. Each begins with "We know."

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Sinneth not.**—There is no reason to supply "unto death." (Comp. the Note on chap. iii. 9.) St. John means strongly to insist, in this the solemn close of his Letter, that the true ideal Christian frame is the absence of wilful sin. Stumbles there may be, even such as need the prayers of friends, but intentional lawlessness there cannot be.

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.—Rather, *he that is begotten of God keepeth him*: that is, the Son of God preserves him. (Comp. John vi. 39; x. 28; xvii. 12, 15.)

And that wicked one toucheth him not.—The last mention of the devil was in chap. iii. 10. The devil and his angels attack, but cannot influence so long as the Christian abides in Christ. (Comp. 1 Pet. v. 8; Eph. vi. 11; Rev. iii. 10.)

(3 b.) *Personal assurance that we are God's sons* (verse 19).

Next after the cardinal point that righteousness is the characteristic

of the new birth comes the necessity that the Christian should make up his mind that he has been, or is being, born again, and is really different from the world. The proofs would be seen in chaps. i. 6; ii. 3, 5, 29; iii. 9, 14, 19, 24; iv. 7, 13, 15; v. 1, 10.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **The whole world lieth in wickedness.**—Rather, *the wicked one*. There is a constant danger lest Christians should forget this. (Comp. Gal. i. 4.)

(3 c.) *Personal assurance of the Incarnation, of the gift of the spiritual sense, and of abiding in the God of Truth through His Son* (verse 20).

The series ends with a climax: the Son is indeed come; He gave us the faculty of seeing the true God; and in that Almighty Being we actually are, through the Son. The greatest fact of all to St. John's mind is that his Friend and Master of sixty years ago was the very Word made flesh. (Comp. chaps. i. 1, 2; ii. 13, 22, 23; iii. 5, 8, 16, 23; iv. 2, 9, 10; v. 1, 5, 9, 11.)

⁽²⁰⁾ **And hath given us an understanding.**—Comp. Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 12—15; Eph. i. 18. This spiritual faculty of discernment was one of the gifts of that Spirit which Christ was to send. (Comp. chap. ii. 20, 27; John xiv. 26; xvi. 13.)

Him that is true.—The personality of God. Amid all the

standing, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus

Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. ⁽²¹⁾ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

deceptions and fluctuations of the world, St. John felt, with the most absolute and penetrating and thankful conviction, that the followers of Christ were rooted and grounded in perfect, unshakable, unassailable truth. This could not be unless they were resting on the living Son and holding fast to Him.

This is the true God, and eternal life.—A most solemn and emphatic crown to the whole Epistle. "This God, *as seen in His Son*, is the true God." If the Word had not been God, God could not have been seen in Him: "And God, seen in His Son, is eternal life." This is only another way of putting John xvii. 3. (Comp. verses 11, 12, and 13.) To make "this is the true God" refer only to the Son is equally admissible by grammar, but hardly suits the argument so well.

(4) LAST WARNING (verse 21).

⁽²¹⁾ **Little children, keep yourselves from idols.**—This parting word is suggested by the thought of "the true God." Every scheme of thought, every object of affection, which is not of Him, is a rival of His empire, a false god, a delusive appearance only, without solidity or truth. We cannot con-

clude better than in the words of Ebrard: "This idea is a general and very comprehensive one: it embraces all things and everything which may be opposed to the God revealed in Christ and to His worship in spirit and in truth. Pre-eminently, therefore, it embraces the delusive and vain idols of the Corinthian Gnosticism, whether ancient or modern; but it includes also the idols and false mediators of superstition, to whom the confidence is transferred which is due only to God in Christ—be their name Madonna, or saints, or Pope, or priesthood, or good works, or pictures, or office, or church, or sacraments. The One Being in whom we have 'the life eternal' is *Christ* And this Christ we possess through the *Spirit of God*, whose marks and tokens are not priestly vestments, but faith and love. In this meaning, the Apostle's cry sounds forth through all the ages, in the ears of all Christians, '**LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS!**' The holiest things may become a snare if their letter is regarded, and not their spirit. Every Christian Church has a tendency to worship its own brazen serpents. Happy are they who have a Hezekiah to call them Nehushtan!"

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

- I. WHO WROTE THEM?
- II. DATE.
- III. CHARACTER AND SCOPE.

- IV. WHERE WERE THEY WRITTEN?
- V. LITERATURE.

I. Who wrote them?—It is difficult to imagine why any should suppose these two Epistles to be by different hands. Was this author the Apostle?

(1) *External Evidence.*—This is not nearly so strong as for the First. It is natural that it should be so, for the two Epistles seem to have been regarded as of far less general interest; and, therefore, there was less obvious propriety in placing them in a collection of important Apostolical literature, and little reason why they should be quoted at all. The main argument for them is, indeed, their unaffected, inartificial kinship to the First. The oldest authority for the Second is the Muratorian Canon, composed before A.D. 170. Origen speaks of St. John's Epistles in the plural, and his disciple, Dionysius, cites the Third by name. The Muratorian Canon speaks of two Epistles of John, apparently distinct from the First. The Muratorian writer explains the principle of his arrangement of the Canon distinctly: saying that the Epistles of Paul to

Philemon and Timothy, although addressed only to individuals, were placed in the Canon on account of their character. And even if the two Epistles of John mentioned were the First and Second, the fact that the Epistle to Philemon has precedence of those to Timothy (and Titus), probably because it is addressed also to Apphia and Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house, makes it very easy to understand that the Second Epistle of John (early supposed to be addressed to a church under the symbolic form of a lady) would be received into a canon, while the Third, addressed to an unknown individual, and dealing with special circumstances, might not be considered sufficiently general for such a position. In early days there must have been many fugitive writings of the Apostles; and the discretion of the churches in selecting from them for an authorised collection would be guided probably more by usage than by deliberate valuation. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 190—220), says,

II. AND III. JOHN.

"The Second Epistle of John, written to the Virgins, is of the simplest character; it is written to a certain Babylonian, called Electa, but that means the election of the holy Church" (*Opera*, p. 1011, ed. Potter). Origen, in addition to what has been quoted from him above, is alleged by Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* vi. 25) to have said, "Not all consider these Epistles to be genuine," without endorsing the doubt himself. Dionysius of Alexandria, pupil and successor of Origen, makes use of the Second and Third Epistle to illustrate St. John's diction; he says that they were generally received as St. John's by tradition. Irenæus, disciple of Polycarp and of Papias (he died A.D. 202), quotes 2 John, verse 7, by a mistake of memory, as belonging to the First Epistle; the words of 2 John, verse 11, he cites as by John the disciple of the Lord. Ephrem the Syrian knew both Epistles, but it is easy to understand why two small fragments of such a private character were not translated in early days, and therefore did not appear in the Peshito version; for that contains only three general Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 1 John). Cyprian shows that the Second Epistle was received as Apostolical and Canonical in the North African Church, by the fact that he mentions a quotation of the tenth verse by Aurelius, Bishop of Chullabis. Eusebius by speaking of St. John's Epistles in the plural number (*Demonstratio Evangelica*, iii. 5) shows that he himself recognised some other Epistles as well as the First; but, as from their shortness and small range there had been very slight occasion to quote them, he put them among the highest class of those writings which were not

placed by absolutely universal consent in the authoritative Canon, and were therefore called Antilegomena. Jerome gives the "opinion of several writers," not as his own, that they were by the traditional John the Presbyter; a view rejected by Oecumenius and Bede. In the Middle Ages they were received without question as the Apostle's; then Erasmus took up the opinion mentioned by Jerome, and was followed by Grotius. Most modern commentators recognise them as Apostolic. The Tübingen writers are, of course, obliged to consider them as later, referring them to Montanistic, or at any rate, sub-apostolic times.

(2) *Internal Evidence*.—The term "elder": The fact that St. John does not give his name is in favour of authenticity. As in the Gospel and the First Epistle, he prefers to retain a dignified incognito, intelligible to all whom it concerned. Even if the messengers did not know whose letters they were carrying, even if the correspondents did not know the handwriting, they would be perfectly aware from the style and matter, and the promise of a visit. It is doubtful whether by "elder" he meant "aged," or an official position. In classical Greek these words would have a different form, but St. John's Greek is that of a man who had become accustomed to a provincial form of the language late in life, and quite admits of slight irregularities. If he means an office, there is nothing to show that all the Apostles always used the apostolic title. St. Peter called himself "fellow-presbyter" (1 Pet. v. 1), and Eusebius called the Apostles Presbyters (*Eccl. Hist.* iii. 39). The Apostles and "Overseers"

INTRODUCTION.

were, in fact, only a specially responsible and important branch of the Presbyterate. As the last remaining Apostle, St. John might prefer not to insist on a designation now unique; or, as the name "elder" was originally adopted with reference to mature age, he may have used it as a hint of his own advanced years; or the dangers of the times may have made it advisable for him, for his messenger, and for his correspondents, to drop the higher title.

The only authority for the existence of another John at Ephesus, at the same time as the Apostle, called "the elder," and "the disciple of the Lord," is Papias, quoted by Eusebius. Is it not possible, that, as Eusebius says that he was "very small in mind," there may be some confusion in some of these details? May not even the confusion itself have arisen from these anonymous Epistles being misunderstood by the unintelligent? But, even admitting the existence of such a second John, it is too much to ask us to believe that he resembled the Apostle not only in name and history, but also in style, character, and thought. And where it was extremely reasonable that the Apostle should leave out his name, it becomes most improbable that this alternative John should have left it out.

The Second and Third Epistles are full of peculiar forms, common also to the First. Notice 2 John verse 1, "knowing the truth"; verse 2, "abide in"; verse 3, "in truth and love"; verse 4, "walking in"; verse 5, "the commandment which we had from the beginning" (1 John ii. 7); verse 6, "this is love, that"; "as ye heard from the

beginning" (1 John iii. 11, 23); verse 7, "deceivers are gone forth" (1 John ii. 18); "confessing not Jesus Christ coming in the flesh" (1 John iv. 1, 2); "the anti-christ"; verse 9, "abideth not in the doctrine, hath not God" (1 John ii. 23); "hath the Son and the Father"; verse 12, "that our joy may be full" (1 John i. 4); 3 John, verse 1, "in truth"; verses 3, 4, "walkest in truth"; verse 11, "is of God, hath not seen God" (1 John iii. 6, 10; iv. 8). There are five or six expressions in the two Epistles which do not occur elsewhere in St. John's writings, but it would be in the highest degree absurd to confine any writer exclusively to the language used in a former production. Additional reason for variety here would be found in the simple colloquial character of the writings.

Accordingly, while there is every reason to hold that the Second and Third Epistles are by the author of the First, and the First by the Author of the Gospel, it is difficult to find any valid reason to the contrary.

II. Date.—In the absence of all evidence to the contrary, it seems probable that the circumstances and time were not very dissimilar in all three Epistles.

III. Character and Scope.—In the Second, the Apostle, who is probably staying at the same place as some of his correspondent's children, writes to a mother and her other children to express his sympathy and delight at the faith of the family, and to warn them against admitting false teachers to their circle. It contains noticeable definitions of love, antichrist,

II. AND III. JOHN

and of true and false believers. It also has a general lesson on the treatment of wilful depravers of divine truth.

In the Third, he recounts how some missionaries had been badly received by Diotrephes, who had ambitiously obtained for himself the chief influence in a certain church, but notwithstanding Gaius had been courageous and kind enough to entertain them hospitably. Gaius is exhorted to help them still further. The Letter gives us an idea of the high importance of hospitality at the time as a Christian virtue; and brings out the fact that St. John's authority was no less disputed in certain cases than St. Paul's. It is probable that the church of Diotrephes had not been founded by St. John;

and St. John had special claim to be obeyed; and that ecclesiastical influence seems to have by this time become vested in a single head.

IV. Where were they written?—Probably at Ephesus, before a tour of inspection. Had they been written in Patmos, some notice of the captivity might be expected.

V. Literature.—To the authorities mentioned in the First Epistle, add the Articles in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and a paper by Professor Salmon on the Third Epistle in the *Christian Observer*, April, 1877. I should mention again my obligations to Dr. Karl Braune.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

⁽¹⁾ **THE** elder unto the
Verses 1, 2. elect lady and
The person ad- her children,
dressed.

After
A.D. 90.

whom I love in the truth;
and not I only, but also
all they that have known

[1. Address (verses 1—3).

(a) CHARACTER OF THE PERSON
ADDRESSED: her adherence
to the truth (verses 1, 2).

(b) SALUTATION (verse 3).

2. Exhortation (verses 4—11).

(a) STATEMENT ABOUT CERTAIN
OF HER CHILDREN (verse 4).

(b) MAIN MESSAGE: Appeal to
mutual love (verse 5).

(c) DEFINITION OF LOVE (verse
6).

(d) FIXITY OF GOSPEL TEACH-
ING (verse 6).

(e) THE DECEIVERS AND ANTI-
CHRISTS (verse 7).

(f) DANGER (verse 8).

(g) FALSE PROGRESS A TEST
(verse 9).

(h) THOSE WHO HAVE NOT THE
CARDINAL DOCTRINE OF
CHRISTIANITY NOT TO BE
ENTERTAINED BY HER
(verses 10, 11).

3. Conclusion (verses 12, 13).

(a) PURPOSE OF COMING
SHORTLY (verse 12).

(b) MESSAGE FROM HER SISTER'S
CHILDREN (verse 13).]

himself "the old man," or, "the elder," writes to a mother, whose name is possibly Kyria, and to her children. Her sister's children are in the same place as the writer. The two mothers are both honoured with the religious title "elect." The writer (we assume from the introduction that he is the Apostle John) loves the family with true Christian love. All who are in the way of truth have the same feelings for them, for the truth is a bond of union between all such. He wishes them grace, mercy, and peace from the Father and the Son, in all their thoughts and all their affections (verses 1—3).

(1 a.) ⁽¹⁾ **The elder.**—The word is used with reference to age in 1 Tim. v. 2; 1 Pet. v. 5; with reference to office, Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xv. 4, 6, 23; xvi. 4; xx. 17; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19; Tit. i. 5; Jas. v. 14; 1 Pet. v. 1.

Unto the elect lady.—St. Paul uses "elect" in exactly the same way (Rom. xvi. 13). (Comp. also 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.) The use of the epithet for the sister in verse 13 shows that it is impossible that the

(1) A man so well-known to his correspondent that he only calls

the truth ; ⁽²⁾ for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. ⁽³⁾ Grace be with

you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord

Verse 3. Greeting.

word should be the correspondent's name. The Greek word, however, for "lady," (*Kuria*, or *Kyria*) was a proper name; so that those who think that St. John addresses "the elect *Kyria*" are at liberty to do so. The absence of the article would not be more surprising in that case than it would be if we translate "lady," for "elect" would evidently be in such familiar use that the article would be easily omitted.

If the name of the matron is not given, it is not absurd to suppose that the dangers of the times, or family persecution, may have made it advisable that both her name and that of the writer should be withheld. The messenger would supply both deficiencies.

The term "lady" would not imply anything about her social station. Epictetus says that all women above fourteen were addressed by men in this term.

And her children.—Those of them who were with their mother. St. John seems to have seen some of the family later.

Whom I love in the truth.—Rather, *in truth*; i.e., with true Christian love, with all the sincerity, purity, and respect, which the true love which springs from God requires. (See Notes on 1 John iii. 18, 19.)

And not I only . . .—St. John disclaims any special peculiarity in his affection for the family. All Christians who had been brought or should be brought into relation with them would have the same

feeling; because the character of all of them was based on the truth as it is in Christ, and moulded on it.

⁽²⁾ **For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.**—The personal form of this sentence irresistibly reminds us of John xv. 6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If Christ is once in our hearts, He will not leave us unless we deliberately leave Him. The expression is therefore equivalent to saying, "We will not let Him go."

(1 b.) ⁽³⁾ **Grace be with you, mercy, and peace.**—(Comp. 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 21.) "Grace" is the favour of God conveying fully every spiritual blessing (Rom. iii. 4; Eph. ii. 4–10); "mercy" is the pitifulness which sympathises with man, is longing to forgive his sins, and is more ready to hear than he to pray (Luke x. 30–37; Ps. ciii. 3–18): "peace" is the result of the reception of these two gifts in the heart, the untroubled calm of a conscience void of offence before God and men (John xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1; Phil. iv. 4; Col. iii. 15).

From God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.—The perfect independence, parallel equality, and mutual connection of the two Persons is noticeable.

In truth and love.—To be joined with "grace, mercy, and peace." Truth was to absorb and

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. ⁽⁴⁾ I rejoiced greatly

Verses 4 — 11.
Exhortation.

that I found
of thy chil-
dren walking

in truth, as we have received a commandment

from the Father. ⁽⁵⁾ And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

⁽⁶⁾ And this is love, that

regulate all their intellectual faculties; love, all their emotional.

(2) St. John had lately had opportunity of observing how some of the matron's children proved their adherence to the truth by their daily conduct. Having congratulated her about this, he states the chief thing which he desires of her: the pure Christian love which implies every other grace and virtue; in other words, walking after the divine commandments. That this love should be pure, that these commandments should be unimpaired, it was necessary to remember that nothing new could be added to the original message of Christ. This warning was timely, because many errors had already appeared, especially that greatest error which denied the Incarnation. The family must, therefore, be on its guard, lest it should be cheated of its reward. The test was very simple: any advance beyond the doctrine of Christ. It would be better for the family not to entertain in their house any who had committed themselves to these doctrines of development (verses 4—11).

(2 a.) ⁽⁴⁾ I rejoiced . . . — Comp. Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4; 2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3; Phil. i. 3; Col. i. 3.

Of thy children.—Probably those met at home.

Walking in truth.—Comp. John viii. 12; 1 John i. 6, 7; ii. 6; 3 John, verses 3, 4.

As we have received a commandment.—That is, walking according to the revelation of God's will in Christ Jesus.

(2 b.) ⁽⁵⁾ Love is the Christian's moral disposition of mind, which embraces all other virtues and graces. It implies faith, because it is founded on Christian principle, and can only be tested by a right belief. It implies purity, because it is modelled on the love of God, and has abjured the old man. It implies unselfishness, because it desires the good of the other for His own sake and God's. It implies humility, because it distrusts itself, relies on God, and thinks more of the other than of itself. (Comp. John xiii. 14; xv. 12; 1 Cor. xiii.; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 John iii. 11, 23; iv. 7, 21.)

Not as though.—See the Notes on 1 John ii. 7, 8, and iii. 11.

(2 c.) ⁽⁶⁾ The attitude of love in general, whether towards God or man, is best defined and described as "walking after God's commandments." It might have been thought that love would be a vague, immeasurable feeling, differing

we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. ⁽⁷⁾ For many deceivers are entered into the world,

¹ Or, gained: Some copies read, which ye have gained, but that ye receive, &c.

who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁽⁸⁾ Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought,¹ but that

chiefly in intensity; but the Christian disposition which is described as love is that practical and enlightened result of faith which naturally acts and expresses itself by following God's will in all things. (Comp. 1 John iv. 7, 16.)

(2 d.) **This is the commandment.**—The sum of all God's commandments for us in this: that we should be doers of the word which we have heard since first Christ began to fulfil the Law and Prophets, and not of any other. All development from what He said, or from what we have repeated from Him, is disobedience and error. (Comp. 1 John ii. 24.)

(2 e.) *The appearance of deceivers is the reason for this warning against false progress* (verse 7).

The ground of his love for the matron and her family was that they held to the truth. He is proportionately anxious that they should not go beyond it through evil influences.

⁽⁷⁾ **Deceivers.**—“Those who cause others to wander.” (Comp. 1 John ii. 26; iv. 1–6; 1 Tim. iv. 1.)

Entered into the world.—Comp. 1 John ii. 19; iv. 1.

Confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.—Rather, *confess not Jesus Christ coming in flesh*. The Greek implies the idea only, without re-

ference to time. (Comp. 1 John iv. 2, 3.) The expression would include both those who denied that Jesus was the Messiah, and those who, for Gnostic theories, held Him to be only a phantom, declaring the Incarnation to be an impossibility.

This is . . .—Rather, *the deceiver, and the antichrist*—i.e., among all the human errors by which the influence of the Evil One is manifested, this is the most destructive. Those who adopt such errors are the most fatal deceivers and opponents of Christ and truth.

(2 f.) *The warning* (verse 8).

⁽⁸⁾ **Look to yourselves.**—For the triple “we” in this verse, read “ye.” The result of the error would be loss of the fellowship with the Father and the Son in truth and love. (Comp. Gal. iii. 1–4; iv. 11.)

Which we (or, ye) have wrought.—Their faith, hope, love, and the growth of the Christian graces.

A full reward.—The diminution of the reward would be in proportion to the gravity of the error. The reward would be the peace of God which passeth all understanding, the blessed stability, firmness, and joy which truth and love communicate. (Comp. Col. iii. 24; Gal. iv. 2.)

we receive a full reward.
⁽⁹⁾ Whosoever transgresseth,
 and abideth not in the
 doctrine of Christ, hath
 not God. He that abideth
 in the doctrine of Christ,
 he hath both the Father

and the Son. ⁽¹⁰⁾ If there
 come any unto you, and
 bring not this doctrine,
 receive him not into *your*
 house, neither bid him
 God speed: ⁽¹¹⁾ for he that
 biddeth him God speed is

(2 g.) *The test* (verse 9).

Progression beyond Christ's teaching, a sign of the absence of God; refusal to go beyond His lines a proof of the presence of Father and Son.

⁽⁹⁾ **Transgresseth.**—Rather, *goeth beyond*. (Comp. Matt. xxi. 9; 1 Tim. i. 18; v. 24; 2 Tim. iii. 7, 14; Tit. i. 9.)

The doctrine of Christ.—That which Christ taught. (Comp. Matt. vii. 28; xvi. 12; xxii. 33; Mark i. 22; iv. 2; xii. 38; John viii. 31; Acts ii. 42; v. 28.)

Hath not God.—Comp. 1 John ii. 23; v. 12.

(2 h.) *Practical direction* (verses 10, 11).

Although it would be possible to love unbelievers, in the sense of earnestly desiring that they might come to a knowledge of the truth, it would be wrong—for sincere Christians it would be impossible—to hold out to them the right hand of fellowship. Especially dangerous would it be for the matron and her family. (Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 6.)

⁽¹⁰⁾ **If there come.**—The construction implies that it was the case. St. John was dealing with facts. St. Paul held the same view (Rom. xvi. 17; Gal. i. 8, 9; Tit. iii. 10, 11; and, in regard to morals, 1 Cor. v. 11; xvi. 22).

This doctrine.—See verse 9.

He is not speaking of those who had never heard or been instructed in the doctrine of Christ; they would be less dangerous. He means those who deliberately altered the Apostolic teaching. And his reason is evidently chiefly the religious welfare of the matron and her family. The case supplies an important instruction in the theory of Christian social conduct.

Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.—These are no terms of ordinary politeness, which the Apostle does not forbid, but terms of close Christian intimacy and spiritual communion, the deliberate cultivation of personal acquaintance, fraternal intercourse. The highest sort of Christian brotherly love—love, that is, in its fulness and truth—can only find reciprocity in the same atmosphere of Christ, on the same basis, and in the same characteristics. (Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 16.)

⁽¹¹⁾ **Is partaker of his evil deeds.**—Condone his false doctrine; puts himself in a position to accept it; shares the guilt of his disloyalty by sympathising with him; and in this way lowers his whole moral standard, doing an injury to "God, Christ, the Church, the truth, individual communities, and his own soul." If any interpret the exhortations to

partaker of his evil deeds. |

| (12) Having many things to

love in the Epistles of St. John too liberally, or by too low a measure, this passage is a wholesome corrective. In applying this teaching to modern times we should remember (1) that St. John is only speaking of those who deliberately deprave the doctrine of Christ in its great outlines; (2) that there may be much in ourselves, in our systems, in our quarrels, in our incrustations of divine truth, in our want of the sense of proportion in dealing with divine things, which may have hindered others from receiving Christ.

(3) Conclusion (verses 12, 13)

(12) Having many things to write unto you.—This verse shows that the Letter to the matron and her family was not a mere accompaniment of a copy of the First Epistle. His heart is full of things to write, but he hopes soon to have unlimited conversation.

Paper.—The Egyptian *papyrus*.

Ink.—A mixture of soot, water, and gum. The papyrus-tree grows in the swamps of the Nile to the height of ten feet and more. Paper was prepared from the thin coats that surround the plant. Pliny describes the method (xiii. 23). The different pieces were joined together by the turbid Nile water, as it has a kind of glutinous property. One layer of papyrus was laid flat on a board, and a cross layer put over it; these were pressed, and afterwards dried in the sun. The sheets were then fastened or pasted together. There were never more than twenty of

these sheets fastened together in a roll; but of course the length could be increased to any extent. The writing was in columns, with a blank slip between them; it was only on one side. When the work was finished, it was rolled on a staff, and sometimes wrapped in a parchment case (Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, p. 567).

Of the ink used by the Romans, Pliny says that it was made of soot in various ways, with burnt resin or pitch. "For this purpose they have built furnaces which do not allow the smoke to escape. The kind most commended is made in this way from pine-wood: it is mixed with soot from the furnaces or baths; and this they use for writing on rolls. Some also make a kind of ink by boiling and straining the lees of wine." The black matter of the cuttle-fish was also sometimes used for writing (Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, p. 110).

The pen was a reed, sharpened with a knife, and split like a quill-pen.

The Jews seem to have used lamp-black dissolved in gall-juice, or lamp-black and vitriol, for ink. The modern scribes "have an apparatus consisting of a metal or ebony tube for their reed-pens, with a cup or bulb of the same material attached to the upper end for ink. This they thrust through the girdle, and carry with them at all times" (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 131; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 1802).

Speak face to face.—Not that there was any oral tradition which he would not write down.

write unto you, I would
 not write
 Verses 12, 13. with paper
 Conclusion. and ink: but
 I trust to come unto you,

Gr.
 mouth
 to
 mouth.

and speak face to face,¹
 that our joy may be full.
 (13) The children of thy
 elect sister greet thee.
 Amen.

His Gospel and First Epistle would contain the outline of all his teaching. But on this occasion there was no need for writing. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

That our joy may be full.—Comp. 1 John i. 4. It would be the deep satisfaction of the interchange of spiritual thoughts and aspirations without the limitations of a monologue or of writing materials.

(13) The children of thy elect sister.—He may have been staying at this second matron's house; at any rate, the family knew he was writing. The simplicity of the great Apostle, the personal friend of the risen Lord, the last of the great pillars of the Church of Christ—in transmitting this familiar message, makes a most instructive finish to what is throughout a beautiful picture.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

<p>(1) THE elder unto the wellbeloved Verse 1. Address. Gaius, whom I love in the truth.¹</p> <p>(2) Beloved, I wish² above</p>	<p>After A.D. 90. — ¹ Or, truly. ² Or, pray.</p>	<p>all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.</p> <p>Verses 2 — 12. Substance of the Epistle.</p>

[1. Address (verse 1).

2. Substance (verses 2—12).

(a) GOOD WISHES FOR BODILY HEALTH (verse 2).

(b) HIGH CHARACTER OF GAIUS FOR (a) CONSISTENCY (verses 3, 4); (b) HOSPITALITY (verses 5, 6, 7).

(c) GENERAL DUTY OF RECEIVING CHRISTIAN TRAVELLERS (verse 8).

(d) OPPOSITION OF DIOTREPHES TO THE APOSTLE (verses 9, 10).

(e) EXHORTATION TO GAIUS NOT TO FOLLOW SUCH AN EVIL EXAMPLE (verse 11).

(f) GENERAL TRUTH: contrast between the followers of good and of evil (verse 12).

(g) COMMENDATION OF DEMETRIUS, AND APPEAL TO CONFIDENCE (verse 12).

3. Conclusion (verses 13, 14).]

(1) The elder.—See the *Introduction*, and 2 John, verse 1.

Gaius.—The common Roman

name Caius. A Caius is mentioned in Acts xix. 29; xx. 4; Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14. The difference in date between these and St. John's correspondent would alone be sufficient reason against any attempt at identification. There is nothing to show whether he was a presbyter or not.

Whom I love in the truth.—Or, *in truth*. (See 2 John, verse 1.)

(2 a.) (2) Beloved.—St. John's affection is founded on the high merits of Caius as a Christian.

Above all things.—This may mean "*in all things*."

Be in health.—An ascetic would be surprised that one of the greatest of the Apostles should be so earnest on such a point. But the better a man's health, the more thoroughly he can do the work of God. Sickness may be allowed to chasten the erring or rebellious heart, but a Christian whose faith is firm and character established, can ill afford to despise the inestimable blessing of a sound body. Functional and organic disorder or

⁽³⁾ For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

⁽⁴⁾ I have no greater joy

than to hear that my children walk in truth.

⁽⁵⁾ Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; ⁽⁶⁾ which have

enervation proportionately lessen the capacity for thought, resolution, and activity.

Even as thy soul prospereth.—The word “prospereth” is literally *makes good way*, and so links on to the idea of walking, in verses 3 and 4. The health of the soul came first in the Apostle’s mind: when there is that, he can wish for bodily health to support it.

(2 b.) ⁽³⁾ I rejoiced greatly.—Compare 2 John, verse 4. “For” introduces the reason of the high praise in verse 2.

The truth that is in thee.—The inward presence of Christ, manifested by the Christian life and consistency of Caius.

Even as thou walkest in the truth.—This is an additional evidence from the brethren to show that the presence of the truth in Caius had been practically tested.

Thou is emphatic in the Greek, showing that there were others, like Diotrephes, of whom this could not be said.

⁽⁴⁾ I have no greater joy.—This is a general statement arising out of the particular instance. The comparative is double—a comparative formed on a comparative; it may be only irregular, an evidence that the writer was not a classical Greek scholar, or it may be for intensity. There is a similar comparative in Eph. iii. 8, where the force is evidently intensive.

My children means the mem-

bers of the churches specially under the care of St. John.

⁽⁵⁾ **Thou doest faithfully**—i.e., worthily of a faithful man, consistently with the Christian character. It may be translated, “Thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever”

Whatsoever thou doest.—Done from right motives, as unto Christ. Whatever form (it is hinted that the form would be various) the activity of Caius might take, so high was the Apostle’s opinion of his character, that he was sure it would be done wisely and well.

And to strangers.—According to another reading it is, “And that, strangers,” as in 1 Cor. vi. 6, Eph. ii. 8, Phil. i. 28. Either way, the strangers would be Christians; but, according to the reading in the text, the brethren would be more or less acquaintances of their host. The duty of entertaining Christians on their travels was of peculiar importance in early times, (1) from the length of time which travelling required, (2) from the poverty of the Christians, (3) from the kind of society they would meet at public inns. The duty is enforced in Rom. xii. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 9.

⁽⁶⁾ **Charity** might be translated “love.”

Before the church.—That where the Apostle then was, and

borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: ⁽⁷⁾because that for his name's

sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. ⁽⁸⁾We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth. ⁽⁹⁾I

from which they had probably been sent forth as missionaries, or, at any rate, with some definite religious object.

Whom if thou bring forward.—Perhaps while they were still staying with Caius, the emissaries sent back a report to the church whence they came. St. John seems to imply that there was still something which Caius could do for them. "If thou bring forward" is in the Greek in the past; "when thou hast sent them on, it will be a good work."

After a godly sort.—Rather, *worthily of God*. (Comp. Tit. iii. 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 11.) It would imply journey money, provisions, love, care, encouragement, prayer, a humble and reasonable imitation of God's providence to Caius, proportional to his means, the occasion, and the recipients.

⁽⁷⁾ **Because that for his name's sake they went forth.**—Their object was the highest possible—the glory of God's name. Hence there must have been some kind of missionary character in their journey. (Comp. Acts v. 41; xv. 40; Rom. i. 6; Jas. ii. 7.)

Of the Gentiles.—Probably the heathens among whom they were preaching. From settled churches, or wealthy Christians of long standing, there would be nothing inimical to the interests of the message in receiving material support. Among those who were

hearing for the first time, it would be highly prejudicial if there were any appearance of selling the truth. (Comp. 1 Cor. ix. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 7; xii. 16; 1 Thess. ii. 9.)

(2 c.) ⁽⁸⁾ **We therefore.**—In contrast to the heathens.

To receive.—In the original there is a play with the word "receiving" in verse 8. (Comp. Matt. x. 40.)

That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.—Fellow-helpers with them. The principle of co-operation was one of the earliest and leading ideas of the kingdom of Christ. Those who try to work alone lose the mighty force of sympathy, are sure to make mistakes, cannot help arousing opposition, and run the risk of nursing in their own souls an unsuspected spirit of self-will, self-confidence, and spiritual pride. Those who do not care to help the good works of others are at best cold Christians, feeble believers; they fail in the great critical testing virtue of Christian love; they limit the operation of God, who has chosen to work by human means; they hinder the spread of the gospel, and delay the second coming of Christ. (Comp. 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. i. 27; Col. iv. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 2.)

(2 d.) ⁽⁹⁾ **I wrote unto the church.**—"I wrote somewhat unto the Church." This may either have been a copy of his Gospel or

wrote unto the church : but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words : and not

content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church. ⁽¹¹⁾ Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God : but he

his First Epistle, or a lost letter of no special importance. The Church was that of the place where Caius and Diotrephes lived. Nothing whatever can be said of Diotrephes, except that his personal ambition led him into the grievous sin of rejecting the authority of the bosom friend of the Saviour; that he talked malignantly against St. John and his friends; that he refused to entertain the emissaries of the Church in which St. John was residing; and that he actually went so far as to eject from the local congregation those who were willing to entertain them. We may conjecture that, on account of the loyalty of Caius to St. John, there was so little intercourse between him and Diotrephes, that he would not even hear that St. John had written; that the greater part of the people of the place adhered for the present to Diotrephes, so that in addressing Caius St. John calls them "the church," and "them;" and, from verse 11, that even now St. John did not think it superfluous to urge Caius not to follow the example of Diotrephes or submit to his influence.

Loveth to have the preeminence.—Makes it his evil aim to have the whole influence of the community in his own hands.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **If I come.**—Comp. 1 John ii. 28. St. John was evidently expecting in both Letters to set out on the same journey.

Prating.—Idle slander; the moths that are always attracted to "the fierce light that beats about a throne." The intense spiritual affectionateness of the Apostle of love might be easily misunderstood by an unconverted pretender; but it is needless to imagine the groundless babble of a tyrannical upstart.

Casteth them out.—Not necessarily formal excommunication; but Diotrephes had so far succeeded in his object that he was able to exclude these better disposed persons from the Christian society of the place.

^(2 e.) ⁽¹¹⁾ **Follow not that which is evil.**—One of those simple exhortations so characteristic of St. John, which derive an intense meaning from the circumstances and the context. There was probably every reason why Caius should follow Diotrephes: peace, good-fellowship, the dislike of singularity, popular example, and the indolent indifference which ordinary men feel for truth and right. But the difference between right and wrong is eternal and irreconcilable. The conduct of Diotrephes was of the devil; and

that doeth evil hath not seen God. ⁽¹²⁾ Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true. ⁽¹³⁾ I

had many things to write, but I will not with ^{Verses 13, 14.} ink and pen ^{Conclusion.} write unto thee: ⁽¹⁴⁾ but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak

mighty moral consequences might follow if Caius gave way from good-natured pliability. (Comp. John v. 29; xviii. 23; Eph. v. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 7, 9; Heb. xiii. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11; 1 John iii. 12.)

(2 f.) **He that doeth good is of God.**—Comp. 1 John iii. 10. “Doeth good” includes all practical virtue. (Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 14, 15, 20; iii. 6, 17.)

He that doeth evil hath not seen God.—Comp. 1 John ii. 3; iii. 6, 10; iv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8; v. 19.

(2 g.) ⁽¹²⁾ **Demetrius** may very likely be the bearer of the Epistle.

Good report.—Rather, *the witness*.

Of all men.—All Christians who knew him.

Of the truth itself.—Christ dwelling in him manifested His presence as the Way, the Truth, and the Life in new virtues for every circumstance that arose in the career of Demetrius. His walk, agreeing with the revealed truth of God, showed that God was with him. (Comp. Acts iv. 13.)

And we also.—St. John adds his own independent testimony as a third, in the most emphatic manner possible.

And ye know that our record is true.—There is no arrogance or egotism in this: it is solely the appeal to the loyal

fidelity of Caius—to the simplicity of Christ’s gospel as set forth by John in accordance with the other Apostles. The personal experience of believers would convince them of the truth of the last of the Apostles. (Comp. John xix. 25; xxi. 24.)

(3) ⁽¹³⁾ **I had many things to write.**—Rather, *There were many things which I wished to write.*

But I will not.—Comp. 2 John, verse 12.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Peace be to thee.**—The best wish which the Apostle can form, instead of the usual Greek ending, “Be strong,” or “Farewell!” It was our Lord’s resurrection greeting; the internal peace of a good conscience, the external peace of universal friendship, the heavenly peace of future glory begun even in this life. (Comp. John xx. 19, 26; Rom. v. 33; Gal. vi. 16; Eph. vi. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; 1 Pet. v. 14.)

Our friends salute thee.—Rather, *The friends*. By this appellation, uncommon in the New Testament, St. John recalls our Lord’s words in John xv. 13, 14, 15.

Greet the friends by name.—Each friend was to receive a personal message from the Apostle, and Caius would know who they were as well as if St. John wrote them down. In a short private

face to face.¹ Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Letter it would be unsuitable to have a long list of special messages as in a Pauline Epistle, especially as the Apostle hoped shortly to see them. John perhaps thinks of his Master's ideal in John x. 3.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF
JUDE.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

I. The Author. — Whatever may be our opinion with regard to 2 Peter, sober criticism requires us to believe that this Epistle was written by the man whose name it bears. To suppose that Jude is an assumed name is gratuitous. It remains to determine who the Jude is who addresses us.

He tells us that he is a "servant of Jesus Christ" and "brother of James." Had he been an Apostle he would probably have said so. (Comp. Rom. i. 1; Titus i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1.) Had he been an Apostle he would not have claimed attention by calling himself "the brother of James," when he possessed so very much stronger a claim. The fact that (verse 17) the writer appeals to the words of Apostles proves nothing; an Apostle might do so. But at least such an appeal is more natural in one who is not an Apostle: there being no reason why he should keep his Apostleship in the background if he possessed it. Our Jude, then, is the Judas of Matt. xiii. 55, and the Juda of Mark vi. 3; *not* the Judas of Luke vi. 16 and Acts i. 13, where "*brother of James*" should more probably be "*son of James*." The author of this Epistle is rightly described as

the *brother* of James, "brother" being expressed in the Greek. The James indicated is James "the Just," the brother of the Lord, and first Bishop of Jerusalem, who, though not an Apostle, was nevertheless a person of such dignity as quite to account for this writer thinking it worth while to mention his near relationship to him. The present question is mixed up with the vexed question as to the brethren of our Lord. The view here taken is that they were not the sons of Alphæus—*i.e.*, cousins—but in some real sense brethren: either the children of Joseph and Mary, or of Joseph by a former wife, or by a levirate marriage, or by adoption. Which of these four alternatives is the right one will probably never be determined. Jerome's theory, that they were our Lord's cousins, children of Alphæus, is contradicted by John vii. 5. (See Note there and on Matt. xii. 46.) It owes its prevalence in the West mainly to Jerome's influence. The identification of James the Lord's brother with James the son of Alphæus, which it involves, has never prevailed in the Eastern Church. Our author, then, together with his better known brother, James, were

in some sense our Lord's "brethren," and not Apostles. If it be asked, Would not Jude in this case have appealed to his relationship to Christ rather than to his relationship to James? we may securely answer "No." As the author of the *Adumbrationes* centuries ago remarked, religious feeling would deter him, as it did his brother James in his Epistle, from mentioning this fact. The Ascension had altered all Christ's human relationships, and His brethren would shrink from claiming kinship after the flesh with His glorified Body. This conjecture is supported by facts. Nowhere in primitive Christian literature is any authority claimed or attributed on the basis of nearness of kin to the Redeemer. He Himself had taught Christians that the lowliest among them might rise above the closest of such earthly ties (Luke xi. 27, 28); to be spiritually "the servant of Jesus Christ" was much more than being His actual brother.

Of this Jude very little is known. Unless he was an exception to the statement in John vii. 5 (of which there is no intimation), he did not at first believe on Christ, but joined the Apostles after the convincing fact of the Resurrection (Acts i. 14). That, like his brothers (see Note on 1 Cor. ix. 5), he was married, appears from Hegesippus, who tells us (*Eus. H. E.*, III. xx.) that two grandsons of Jude were brought before Domitian as descendants of a royal house, and therefore dangerous persons; but on their proving their poverty, and explaining that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, they were contemptuously dismissed. This story almost implies that the relationship to Christ was very close; for Hegesippus

remarks, by way of explanation, that Domitian was afraid of Christ, just as Herod was. Statements of St. Jude's preaching in various parts of the world rest upon late and untrustworthy evidence. That he was an Evangelist, is implied in his writing this Epistle; but nothing is known respecting his labours.

II. Authenticity.—The authenticity of the Epistle has been questioned by some from very early times, but without sufficient reason. The evidence against it is mainly this. *External.*—The Epistle is not contained in the Peshito or ancient Syriac version; Eusebius classes it among the disputed books (III. xxv. 3; II. xxiii. 25); Theodore of Mopsuestia seems to have rejected it; few references to it are found in early writers. *Internal.*—It cites apocryphal books, has a suspicious relationship to Romans and 2 Peter; is difficult in style. Against this we may urge that Ephrem Syrus seems to have recognised it; the Muratorian Fragment (*circa* A.D. 170) contains it; the old Latin version contains it; Tertullian (*De Cult. Fem.* I. iii.) accepts it as genuine and Apostolic; Clement of Alexandria quotes it as Scripture (*Strom.* III. ii.; *Paed.* III. viii.); Origen, though he knew of doubts about it (*Comm.* on Matt. xxii. 23) fully accepted it (on Matt. xiii. 55; xviii. 10, *et al.*); Jerome (*Scrip. Eccles.* iv.) says that many rejected it because it quoted apocryphal books, but that it ought to be reckoned among the Scriptures; the Councils of Laodicea (*circa* A.D. 360) and of Hippo (A.D. 393) formally included it in the Canon. The doubts about it are very intelligible: it was not by an Apostle,

INTRODUCTION.

and therefore seemed wanting in authority, and it quoted apocryphal works. Its brevity fully accounts for its not being often quoted. It is too insignificant to be a forgery; a forger would have said more, and would have selected some well-known name, and not that of one but little known, to give authority to his production. Respecting the apocryphal books quoted, see Notes on verses 9 and 14 and the *Excursus*. The difficult style is natural enough in a Jew writing Greek well, but not with ease. As already stated in reference to 2 Peter, a theory that these two Epistles (2 Peter and Jude) are translations from Aramaic originals has recently been advocated (*Did St. Peter write in Greek?* by E. G. King, Cambridge, 1871). It would be presumption on the part of one who is ignorant of Hebrew to pronounce an opinion on the arguments used; but the *number* of them seems to be insufficient. Mere internal evidence of this kind ought to be very strong to counterbalance the entire absence of external evidence. Jerome would certainly give information on this point, if he possessed any, when he makes his own suggestion that St. Peter used different "interpreters" to write his two Epistles. (See Note on 2 Pet. ii. 17.)

III. The Place and Time.—

As to the place we have no evidence, either external or internal. The Epistle contains some indications of time. (1) The fact that the destruction of Jerusalem and consequent ruin of the Jewish nation is not mentioned among the instances of divine vengeance (verses 5—7) is a strong reason for believing that the Epistle was

written before A.D. 70. (2) The fact that such libertines as are here described are allowed to remain members of the Christian community points to a time when Church discipline is in its very infancy. The evils are very similar to those which St. Paul has to condemn in the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. v. 1, 2; vi. 8—18; xi. 17—22). (3) It seems to be implied (verse 17) that some of those addressed had heard Apostles. As to the bearing of the quotation from the *Book of Enoch* on this question, see *Excursus*.

IV. Object and Contents.—

The object is plainly stated (verses 3, 4)—to urge his readers to contend earnestly for the faith which was being caricatured and denied by the libertinism and practical infidelity of certain members of the community. In what Church or Churches this evil prevailed we are not told; but it would be more likely to arise among converts from heathenism than from Judaism. The plan of the Epistle, short as it is, is evidently laid with considerable care; and the writer betrays a fondness for threefold divisions which is quite remarkable. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that wherever a group of three is possible he makes one. One or two of the triplets may be accidental, but the majority of them can hardly be so; and this fact may be worth remembering in discussing the question of priority between this Epistle and 2 Peter. There are ten (or possibly twelve) groups of three in this short Epistle of 25 verses: viz., (1 and 2) verse 1; (3) verse 2; (4) verse 4; (5) verses 5—7; (6) verse 8; (7) verse 11; (8) verses 12—15, 16—18, 19;

(9) verse 19 ; (10) verses 20, 21 ; (11) verses 22, 23 ; (12) verse 25. Of these, (4) and (10) are perhaps doubtful ; but there can be no question about the rest, although the last two are obscured in the English version, owing to our translators having followed a defective Greek text.

(1) INTRODUCTION.

(a) *Three-fold address and three-fold greeting* (verses 1, 2).

(b) *Purpose of the Epistle* (verse 3).

(c) *Occasion of the Epistle* (verse 4).

(2) WARNING AND DENUNCIATION.

(a) *Three instances of God's vengeance* (verses 5—7), and *application of these three instances to the libertines who are now provoking God* (verses 8—10).

(b) *Three examples of similar wickedness* (verse 11).

(c) *Three-fold description corresponding to these three examples* (verses 12—15 ; 16—18 ; 19).

(3) EXHORTATION.

(a) *To strengthen themselves in the faith by prayer, godliness, and hope* (verses 20, 21).

(b) *To treat these libertines with discrimination, making three classes* (verses 22, 23).

(c) *Concluding doxology* (verses 24, 25).

V. The relation of Jude to 2 Peter.—The similarity both in substance and wording between a considerable portion of these two Epistles is so great that only two alternatives are possible ; either one

has borrowed from the other, or both have borrowed from a common source. The second alternative is rarely, if ever, advocated ; it does not explain the facts very satisfactorily, and critics are agreed in rejecting it. But here agreement ends. On the further question, as to which writer is prior, there is very great diversity of opinion. One thing, therefore, is certain, that whichever writer has borrowed, he is no ordinary borrower. He knows how to assimilate foreign material so as to make it thoroughly his own. He remains original even while he appropriates the words and thoughts of another. He controls them, not they him. Were this not so, there would be little doubt about the matter. In any ordinary case of appropriation, if both the original and copy are forthcoming, critics do not doubt long as to which is the original. It is when the copy itself is a masterpiece, as in the case of Holbein's Madonna, that criticism is baffled. Such would seem to be the case here. The present writer is free to confess his own uncertainty. A superficial acquaintance with the subject inclined him to believe in the priority of Jude ; further study disposes him to think that the balance is decidedly in favour of the priority of 2 Peter, although the balance is considerably short of proof. The question cannot be kept distinct from that of the authenticity of St. Peter. Every argument in favour of the authenticity of 2 Peter is something in favour of its priority, and *vice versa* ; although many arguments bear more upon one point than the other. If, then, the genuineness of 2 Peter is accepted as probable, this will add additional weight to the considerations now to

INTRODUCTION.

be urged in favour of the priority of 2 Peter; and they in turn will strengthen the arguments for its genuineness.

This question as to the relation between these two Epistles seems to be one in which the old-fashioned view is not so far wrong after all. And some value may fairly be allowed to the old-fashioned arguments for it: (1) that the account of evil-doers in 2 Peter is in the main a prophecy, whereas St. Jude speaks of them as present; the inference being that St. Jude recognised in what he saw the mischief which St. Peter had foretold; and added weight to his own denunciations by framing them in the very words of the Apostle; (2) that St. Jude's warning, "remember the words which were spoken before by the Apostles . . . how that they told you there shall be mockers in the last time walking after their own ungodly lusts" (verses 17, 18), is an obvious reference to St. Peter's prediction, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Pet. iii. 3). Of course a forger, with St. Jude's words before him, might frame his own words to fit them; but in that case we have still to account for St. Jude's warning, "Remember the words which were spoken before by the Apostles," &c. They may refer to such passages as Acts xx. 29; 2 Tim. iii. 1; or (as some who insist on "how that they told you," or "used to tell you," prefer) to warnings given orally by the Apostles; still 2 Pet. iii. 3 is the most obvious reference.

No doubt it is antecedently more probable that a small Epistle should be republished with much additional matter, than that one-

third of a longer Epistle should be republished with very little additional matter: but what has been said above about 2 Peter being a prophecy, of which St. Jude saw the fulfilment, is an answer to this. Besides which, we may urge that it is antecedently improbable that a forger should take so much from an Epistle that was not only known, but regarded with suspicion in some quarters, because of its quoting apocryphal books. That St. Jude is quoted by one or two writers who seem not to know or to reject 2 Peter (Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen) may be allowed some weight; but this could easily be accounted for, and in itself is not very convincing.

One argument used for the priority of Jude seems to the present writer to tell strongly for the priority of 2 Peter. It is this: that the evil-doers denounced by St. Jude are much more distinctly portrayed than those denounced in 2 Peter. We know from history that the errors indicated increased rapidly from the apostolic age onwards. The later writer, therefore, would have the clearer picture *before his eyes*. Would not the clearer *description*, then, be likely to be his? (See above on the *False Teachers and Scoffers: Introduction to 2 Peter*.) In connection with this point it is worth considering whether the careful directions which St. Jude gives as to the way in which different classes of the ungodly men are to be treated does not point to a later stage of the evil (see Notes on Jude, verses 22, 23). Again, the rather fanciful arrangement into triplets, which prevails in St. Jude's Epistle, looks more like a second writer working

JUDE.

up old material, than a first writer working under no influence from a predecessor.

Of the numerous minute arguments drawn from the wording of parallel passages only one or two specimens can be given here: others are considered in the Notes. Jude, verse 6, contains a telling piece of irony in the double use of "kept," which is wanting in 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude, verse 10, contains a striking antithesis, very epigrammatically stated, which is wanting in 2 Pet. ii. 12; Jude, verses 12, 13, contains some fine similes, especially the one of "wandering stars," which would have fitted the "false teachers" admirably; yet

most of them are absent from 2 Peter. Would a writer who is quite willing to borrow anything that will serve his purpose (this is evident, whichever is the borrower) have wilfully rejected all these good things? If they are improvements added by St. Jude, all is natural enough. It is worth mentioning, in conclusion, that the arguments urged for an Aramaic original tell decidedly in favour of the priority of 2 Peter.

While admitting, therefore, that the case is by no means proved, we may be content to retain the priority as well as the authenticity of 2 Peter, as at least *the best working hypothesis*.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

<p>⁽¹⁾ JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother</p>	<p>A.D. cir. 66.</p>	<p>of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in</p>
--	--------------------------	--

Verses 1, 2.
Greeting.

(1, 2) Address and greeting.

(1) Jude.—As to the Jude who here addresses us see *Introduction*, I.

The servant of Jesus Christ.—Better, *a servant of Jesus Christ*. There is nothing to show that these words indicate an evangelist, although it is more than probable that he was one: his writing this Epistle is evidence of the fact. The words may have a side reference to the ungodly men against whom he writes, who are *not* “servants of Jesus Christ.” As he does not say that he is an Apostle, the inference is that he is not one. Contrast Rom. i. 1 (where see Note on “servant”); 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1 (where “Apostle” is used without “servant”); and Tit. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1 (where “Apostle” is added to “servant”). Excepting St. John, whose characteristic reserve accounts for it, Apostles proclaim themselves to be such in stating their credentials. Hebrews and the Epistle of St. James must be set aside as doubtful, or be admitted as illustrations

of the rule. Phil. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1; and 2 Thess. i. 1 are not exceptions: St. Paul is there combined with others who are not Apostles. The same may be said of Philem. verse 1. Moreover, there St. Paul naturally avoids stating credentials: he wishes to appeal to Philemon’s affection (Philem. verses 8, 9), not to his own authority.

And brother of James.—This is added not merely to explain who he is, but his claim to be heard. It is almost incredible that an Apostle should have urged such a claim, and yet not have stated the much higher claim of his own office: the inference again is that the writer is not an Apostle. Only one James can be meant. After the death of James the brother of John, only one James appears in the Acts (chaps. xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18)—James the Just, brother of our Lord (Matt. xiii. 15), and first Bishop of Jerusalem. (See *Introduction*, I.) The brother of so saintly a man, one of the “pillars” of the Church (Gal. ii. 9), and holding so high an office, might claim the attention of Christians.

Jesus Christ, and called :
(2) mercy unto you, and

peace, and love, be multiplied. (3) Beloved, when I

To them that are sanctified.—A reading of very great authority compels us to substitute *beloved* for “sanctified”; and the whole should probably run thus: *to those who are called beloved in God the Father, and preserved for Jesus Christ*. Some prefer to take “in God the Father” with both participles: *beloved and preserved for Jesus Christ, in God the Father*. The love is such as has existed from the beginning and still continues.

Here, in the first verse, we have a couple of triplets: a three-fold designation of the writer himself, as “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James;” and a three-fold designation of his readers, as “called, beloved, preserved.” In the next verse we have another triplet.

By God the Father.—Better, *in God the Father*. He is the sphere in which the love is displayed: it is in God that Christians love and are loved. The expression “beloved in God,” is unique in the New Testament. St. Paul sometimes writes “God our Father” (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3, *et al.*), and at first this was the more common expression; sometimes “God the Father” (Gal. i. 1, 3, *et al.*).

And preserved in Jesus Christ.—Better, *preserved for Jesus Christ*: i.e., preserved to be His in His kingdom. This preservation has gone on from the first, and continues (John xvii. 2, 12, 24).

Called.—The word is used, in St. Paul’s sense, for all Christians—all who have been called to a knowledge of God and of the

gospel. (Comp. Rom. i. 7; and see note on 1 Cor. i. 24.)

(2) **Mercy unto you, and peace, and love.**—Another triplet, which possibly looks back to the one just preceding: called by God’s mercy, preserved in peace, beloved in love. The addition “and love” is peculiar to this Epistle. “Mercy” and “peace” occur in the opening greetings of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and 2 John: the three are in logical order here: mercy from God to man; hence peace between God and man; hence love of all towards all.

Be multiplied.—By God. The word, as used in salutations, is peculiar to 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude.

(3, 4) The purpose and occasion of the Letter.

(3) **Beloved.**—Very unusual at the beginning of an Epistle; 3 John, verse 2, is the only other example. It indicates, possibly, the writer’s wish to be brief and get to his subject at once; and, as his subject is a very unpleasing one, he hastens to assure his readers of affection for them, to prevent his strong language from offending them.

When I gave all diligence.—Better, *in giving all diligence*: i.e., in having it much at heart. Wiclif and Rheims are nearly right. The expression is unique in the New Testament—2 Pet. i. 5 is similar, but the Greek for “giving” differs in verb and tense from the word used here.

gave all diligence to write
 unto you of
 the common
 salvation, it
 was needful for me to write
 unto you, and exhort you
 that ye should earnestly
 contend for the faith which
 was once delivered unto

the saints. ⁽⁴⁾ For there
 are certain men crept in
 unawares, who were before
 of old ordained to this
 condemnation, ungodly
 men, turning the grace of
 our God into lascivious-
 ness, and denying the only
 Lord God, and our Lord

Of the common salvation.
 —The best MSS. insert “*our*”—
of our common salvation: i.e., of
 those things which pertain to the
 salvation of us all. (Comp. Tit. i.
 4.) Some would take these words
 after “it was needful for me to
 write unto you.” The Authorised
 version is better.

It was needful for me to
 write unto you.—Better, *I found*
it necessary to write at once to you.
 St. Jude had intended to write on
 general grounds; then the circum-
 stances stated in verse 4 made him
 write immediately for the special
 purpose of warning them against a
 pressing danger. The “at once”
 comes from the tense, which is pre-
 sent in the first clause, aorist in the
 second. That St. Jude had in-
 tended to write a *longer* letter is
 pure conjecture, for which there is
 no evidence.

Contend for.—The word is a
 graphic one, implying standing
 over a thing to fight in its defence.
 You must fight as well as build
 (Neh. iv. 16, 18).

The faith—*i.e., that which is*
 believed by Christians: not the ex-
 pression of the doctrine, nor the
 holding of it, but the substance of it.

Once delivered.—Rather, *once*
for all delivered. No change in it
 is possible. (Comp. Gal. i. 8, 9.)

By “the saints” are meant all
 Christians; comp. Acts ix. 13
 (where see Note), 32, 41. The
 word is used advisedly here, in
 marked contrast to the libertines
 now to be denounced.

⁽⁴⁾ **Certain men crept in**
unawares—*viz., into the Church.*
 The “certain” shows that these
 men are a decided minority, and
 has a tinge of depreciation, as in
 Gal. ii. 12. “Crept in unawares”
 is analogous to “unawares brought
 in, who came in privily” (Gal. ii.
 4, where see Note), and to “privily
 bring in” (2 Pet. ii. 1). It is this
 insidious invasion which constitutes
 the necessity for writing stated in
 verse 3. Unfaithful Christians are
 sometimes regarded as an emer-
 gence from within, rather than an
 invasion from without (1 John ii. 19).

Close similarity to 2 Peter begins
 here and continues down to verse
 18; the Notes on the parallel pas-
 sages in 2 Pet. ii. should be com-
 pared throughout. In this Epistle
 the first three and last seven verses
 are the only portions not intimately
 related to 2 Peter.

Who were before of old or-
daind to this condemnation.
 —Literally, *who have been of old*
written down beforehand for this
sentence; or, perhaps, “written up;”
 for the metaphor may come from

Jesus Christ. ⁽⁵⁾ I will | | therefore put you in

the practice of posting up the names of those who had to appear in court for trial. The text is a favourite one with Calvinists; but it gives no countenance to extreme predestinarian views. "Of old" cannot refer to the eternal purposes of God, but to something in history. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether it can refer to the recent warnings of St. Paul and St. Peter that false teachers should arise; otherwise one would be tempted to refer it to 2 Pet. ii. Something more remote from the writer's own day seems to be required: either the Old Testament prophets, or the *Book of Enoch*, quoted below. The Greek word here rendered "before ordained" is in Rom. xv. 4 rendered "written aforetime." (Comp. Eph. iii. 3.)

To this condemnation.—Literally, *to this sentence, or judgment*; but the context shows that the judgment is an adverse one. "*This condemnation*," viz., the one stated in the denunciations which follow, and illustrated by the fate of those mentioned in verses 5—7. Note the three-fold description of the men thus written down for judgment; they are ungodly; they pervert God's grace; they deny Christ.

Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.—Turning Christian liberty into unchristian license. "*Our God*," not theirs; they are "without God in the world." "Wantonness" would be better than "lasciviousness" here, as in 2 Pet. ii. 18. The Greek word expresses license generally, not merely sins of impurity.

Denying the only Lord

God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rather, *denying the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. "God" is an addition to the original text, and must be omitted. "Lord" represents two words in the Greek quite different one from the other. The Genevan version is right all but the insertion of "God;" the Rhemish quite right—having "Dominator;" however, for "Master." We are once more in doubt whether one or two Persons of the Trinity are mentioned here. (Comp. 2 Pet. i. 1.) Certainly 2 Pet. ii. 1 countenances our taking "the only Master" as meaning Christ; and the fact that the article is not repeated with "Lord" is in favour of only one Person being meant. But Luke ii. 29, Acts iv. 24, Rev. vi. 10 countenance our understanding these words as meaning the Father; and the absence of the article before "Lord" is not conclusive. The insertion of "God" is, perhaps, a gloss to insist on this latter interpretation. If it be right, the clause is closely parallel to 1 John ii. 22: "*He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.*" Note the emphatic insertion of "our" once more: they will not have Him for *their* Lord; His divine authority was precisely what they denied.

(5-7) We now enter upon the main body of the Epistle. Three instances of God's vengeance: the unbelievers in the wilderness; the impure angels; Sodom and Gomorrah.

(5) I will therefore put you in remembrance.—Or, *But I*

remembrance, though ye
 once knew
 this, how that
 the Lord,
 having saved

Verses 5-10.
 God's punish-
 ments a warning
 to sinners.

the people out of the land
 of Egypt, afterward de-
 stroyed them that believed
 not. ⁽⁶⁾ And the angels
 which kept not their first

wish to remind you. The "but" indicates opposition to the impiety of those just mentioned.

Though ye once knew this.—The best MSS. and versions compel us to substitute "all things" for "this," and we must translate, *because ye have once for all* (as in verse 3) *known all things*. You have once for all been taught all that I want to say to you; so that I need only remind you, there is no need to instruct. (Comp. Rom. xv. 14, 15, where see Notes; 2 Pet. i. 12; 1 John ii. 21.) "All things" probably has special reference to Old Testament history, as what follows seems to show.

How that the Lord.—"How that" depends upon "remind," not upon "have known." There is very strong evidence in favour of substituting "Jesus" for "the Lord;" a most remarkable reading, showing how, in Christian language, the Man Jesus had become identified with the Eternal Son. The use of "Christ" in 1 Cor. x. 4, though less striking, is similar.

Having saved the people.—Or, perhaps, *having saved a people*. A whole nation was rescued. The order of the three examples of signal punishment is in 2 Peter chronological: impure angels, flood, Sodom and Gomorrah; here not. But the order here is quite intelligible. St. Jude's main object is to warn his readers against that party in the Christian community

who, by its abuse of Christian liberty, transformed the gospel of purity into a gospel of wantonness, and to give them a safeguard against such. And the safeguard is this: to hold fast the faith once for all delivered to them, and to remember the consequences of being unbelieving. For this purpose, no warning could be more apposite than the fate of Jude's own nation in the wilderness. This palmary instance given, two others follow, probably suggested by 2 Peter.

Afterward destroyed.—Better, *secondly, destroyed*. Wiclif, "the secunde tyme;" Rheims, "secondly." The Lord twice manifested His power on Israel: (1) in mercy; (2) in judgment. The reference is almost certainly to Num. xiv. 35; Deut. i. 35, &c. The destruction of Jerusalem can scarcely be meant, whatever date we assign to the Epistle, although the striking reading, "Jesus" for "the Lord," gives some countenance to such an interpretation. The most obvious meaning is, that the people destroyed were those who, in the first instance, were saved. Had the destruction of Jerusalem been intended, the reference would probably have been more clear.

⁽⁶⁾ **And the angels which kept not.**—Rather, *because they kept not*. The construction is similar to that in Matt. xviii. 25, "Forasmuch as he had not to

estate, ¹ but left their own habitation, he hath re-	¹ Or, <i>principality</i> .	served in everlasting chains under darkness unto the
---	--	--

pay." (See Note on verse 8.) This second instance of the impure angels has nothing to do with the original rebellion of Satan, or "fall of the angels." The reference is either to Gen. vi. 2, or (more probably) to passages in the *Book of Enoch*. (See *Excursus* at the end of this Epistle.)

Their first estate.—The Greek word has two meanings: (1) beginning, which our translators have adopted here; (2) rule or power, which would be better. Wiclif has "prinshood;" Rheims, "principalitie." The word is translated "rule" (1 Cor. xv. 24) and "principality" (Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; vi. 12; Col. i. 16; ii. 10, 15; Titus iii. 1). The term belongs to the Jewish classification of angels, and here refers rather to their *power* over things earthly than to the *beginning* of their state. The two meanings are but two views of the same fact: their power or dignity *was* their first estate. Some explain the word of the power of God over the angels; but both wording and context are against this.

Their own habitation.—*Their proper home.* By leaving heaven and coming down to earth, they lost their power over the earth. (Comp. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book v.)

He hath reserved.—Better, *He hath kept*, in ironical contrast to "which kept not" just above: the same Greek word is used in both cases. This ironical contrast does not exist in the parallel passage, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Would a writer, quite willing to copy, have failed to copy

this? On the other hand, what more natural than that St. Jude should add a forcible touch?

In everlasting chains.—Speculations as to how this and 2 Pet. ii. 4 are to be reconciled with such texts as Luke xxii. 31, 1 Pet. v. 8, which speak plainly of the freedom and activity of Satan, and Eph. vi. 12, Rom. viii. 38, Col. ii. 15, which imply numerous agents akin to him, are not very profitable. The reality of powers of evil may be inferred, apart from Scripture, from their effects. That some of these powers are personal, some not, some free, some not, and that all are to be defeated at last, seems to be implied in Scripture; but its silence is a rebuke to curious speculation. Enough is told us for our comfort, warning, and assurance. It consoles us to know that much of the evil of which we are conscious in ourselves is not our own, but comes from without. It puts us on our guard to know that we have such powers arrayed against us. It gives us confidence to know that we have abundant means of victory even over them.

Under darkness.—The Greek word occurs only here, verse 13, 2 Pet. ii. 4, 17, and possibly Heb. xii. 18. A separate English word, such as "gloom," is desirable for these passages.

The great day.—So called Rev. vi. 17 (comp. xvi. 14), and nowhere else in the New Testament. Perhaps it comes from Joel ii. 31; Mal. iv. 5. St. John's expression is the "last day" (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; xi. 24; xii. 48; and nowhere else). "The day of

judgment of the great day. ⁽⁷⁾ Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and

¹ Gr.
other.

going after strange¹ flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. ⁽⁸⁾ Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh,

judgment," "that day," and "the day of the Lord," are other common expressions.

⁽⁷⁾ **Even as.**—Or, possibly, *how*, like "how that" in verse 5, depending upon "put you in remembrance." Sodom and Gomorrha are typical instances of divine vengeance both in the Old and New Testament (Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. l. 40; Rom. ix. 29).

And the cities about them.—Adma and Zeboim (Deut. xxix. 23; Hos. xi. 8).

In like manner.—We must read, *in like manner to these*, and arrange the sentence thus: *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, giving themselves over to fornication in like manner to these.* Who are meant by "these"? Not the ungodly men of verse 4, which would anticipate verse 8; nor the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, which would be somewhat clumsy in the Greek; but the angels of verse 6. The reference is again to the impurity of certain angels in having intercourse with the daughters of men, of which there is so much in the *Book of Enoch*. This sin of the angels was strictly analogous to that of the people of Sodom.

Going after strange flesh.—Strictly, *going astray after other flesh*—i.e., other than is allowed; leaving natural for unnatural uses.

Are set forth for an example, suffering the ven-

geance of eternal fire.—It would be possible to take "of eternal fire" after "example," thus: *are set forth as an example of eternal fire in undergoing punishment.* (Comp. Wisd. x. 7.) The punishment of the submerged cities is perpetual; moreover, there are appearances as of volcanic fire under them. The Greek for "undergoing" occurs here only in the New Testament; but comp. 2 Macc. iv. 48.

⁽⁸⁻¹⁰⁾ Application of these three instances to the libertines who are now provoking God.

⁽⁸⁾ **Likewise also.**—Rather, *Yet in like manner*: i.e., in spite of these warnings. These ungodly men were like the unbelievers in the wilderness in denying Christ and scoffing at His promises; they were like the impure angels in leaving that "constitution which is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20) for the base pleasures of earth; they were like the people of Sodom in seeking even these base pleasures by unnatural courses.

These filthy dreamers.—We must add *also*. "Filthy" is not in the original Greek, nor in any previous English version, but is supplied from the next clause; not rightly, for "dreamers" goes with all three clauses, not with "defile the flesh" only. This being admitted, a number of pain-

despise dominion, and
speak evil of dignities.

⁽⁹⁾ Yet Michael the arch-
angel, when contending

with the devil he disputed
about the body of Moses,
durst not bring against
him a railing accusation,

ful interpretations are at once excluded. "These dreamers *also*," means these ungodly men, who are deep in the slumber of sin (see Note on Rom. xiii. 11), as well as the three classes of sinners just mentioned. Excepting in Acts ii. 17, which is a quotation from Joel ii. 28, the word for "dreamer" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but is found in the LXX. version of Isa. lvi. 10, of dogs that dream and make a noise in their sleep. St. Jude perhaps has this passage in his mind. (See below, second Note on verse 12.) "Dreamers" may perhaps refer to the empty speculations of these men.

Defile the flesh.—Like the inhabitants of the cities of the plain. Some of the earliest forms of Gnosticism, on its antinomian as distinct from its ascetic side, exhibit the licentiousness inveighed against here; *e.g.*, the Simonians, Nicolaitanes, Cainites, Carpocratians.

Despise dominion.—Like the impure angels. Insert "and" before "despise." The "dominion," or *lordship*, is that of Almighty God. *Set aside, or reject* (Mark vii. 9; Luke vii. 30; John xii. 48), would be better than "despise," to mark the difference between this and 2 Pet. ii. 10.

Speak evil of dignities.—Like the murmurers in the wilderness. By "dignities," or *glories*, are meant unseen powers worthy of reverence. The Greek word is rare in the New Testament; only here, 2 Pet. ii. 10, and 1 Pet. i. 11.

Earthly dignities, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are not included. (Comp. the doctrine of Menander, Irenæus, I. xxiii. 5.)

⁽⁹⁾ Yet Michael the arch-angel. — These libertines allow themselves to use language against celestial beings which even an archangel did not venture to use against Satan. In the Old Testament Michael appears as the guardian angel of the people of Israel, Dan. x. 21; xii. 1; in the New Testament he is mentioned only here and in Rev. xii. 7. In the *Book of Enoch* his meekness is spoken of; he is "the merciful, the patient, the holy Michael," xl. 8.

He disputed about the body of Moses.—To be understood quite literally: to make "the body of Moses" into a metaphor for the people of Israel, or the Mosaic law, is most unnatural. This passage is the only evidence extant of any such incident or tradition. The nearest approach to it is the Targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxxiv. 6, which says that Michael was the appointed guardian of Moses' grave. According to Origen (*De Princip.* III. ii. 1) the source of it is a book called the *Ascension* or *Assumption of Moses*. Evidently it is something supposed to be well known to those whom St. Jude is addressing, and it appears to be given as a fact which he believes, though we cannot be sure of this. In any case it does not follow that we are to believe in it as an historical fact. Reverent, and

but said, The Lord rebuke thee.^a ⁽¹⁰⁾ But these speak evil of those things which

^a Zech.
3. 2.

they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those

therefore cautious, theories of inspiration need not exclude the possibility of an unhistorical incident being cited as an illustration or a warning. St. Paul makes use of the Jewish legend of the rock following the Israelites in the wilderness as an illustration (1 Cor. x. 4). The strange question, "What did the devil want with the body of Moses?" has been asked and answered in more ways than one:—(1) to make it an object of idolatry, as the Israelites would be very likely to worship it; (2) to keep it as his own, as that of a murderer, because Moses killed the Egyptian (Ex. ii. 12).

Durst not—Out of respect to Satan's original angelic nature. (Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 1.)

A railing accusation.—More literally, *a sentence savouring of evil-speaking*. Wiclif, "doom"; Tyndale and Cranmer, "sentence"; Rheims, "judgment." Michael brought no sentence against the devil, but left all judgment to God.

The Lord rebuke thee.—The same rebuke is administered to Satan by the angel of Jehovah, when Satan appears as the adversary of Joshua, the high priest, the restorer of the temple and of the daily sacrifice, and one of the Old Testament types of Christ (Zech. iii. 2). It is probable that the tradition here given by St. Jude is derived from this passage in Zechariah, or from a source common to both. We have another reminiscence of Zech. iii. 2 in verse 23.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **But these . . .**—In strong contrast to the scrupulous reverence of the archangel. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

Those things which they know not.—The "dignities" of verse 8. This shows that unseen spiritual powers are there meant: these men would know earthly rulers. It is on the unseen that they show their irreverence.

What they know naturally.—The means of gratifying their desires. The two halves of the verse are in emphatic contrast. What they do not know, and cannot know, they abuse by gross irreverence: what they know, and cannot help knowing, they abuse by gross licentiousness. If this Epistle is prior to 2 Peter, it is strange that the author of the latter should have neglected so telling an antithesis, and should (from a literary point of view) have so spoiled the passage by his mode of adaptation (chap. ii. 12). If 2 Peter is prior, there is nothing strange in St. Jude improving upon the mode of expression. The word for "know" is not the same in both clauses. The word used in "which they know not" is the most general and common word of the kind in Greek, expressing mere perception, and occurring about three hundred times in the New Testament; that used in "what they know naturally" is more definite, and expresses practical experience productive of skill and science; it occurs fourteen times in the New Testament, mostly in

things they corrupt themselves. ⁽¹¹⁾ Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran

greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in

Verses 11—19.
The sins of Cain,
Balaam, and Korah.

the Acts. (Comp. "Paul I know," Acts xix. 15.)

They corrupt themselves.—Or, perhaps, *they work their own ruin*. Note the tense; not future, but present. The corruption, or ruin, is not a judgment hanging over them; it is already going on.

⁽¹¹⁾ Three examples of similar wickedness: Cain, Balaam, Korah.

Woe unto them!—An echo of Christ's denunciations in the first three Gospels, whereby the description of these evil-doers takes for the moment a denunciatory form. The past tenses immediately following are owing to the writer's placing himself in thought at the moment when these men reap the consequences of their sins: their punishment is so certain, that he regards it as having come.

In the way of Cain.—The first great criminal; the first to outrage the laws of nature. Explanations to the effect that these libertines followed Cain by murdering men's souls by their corrupt doctrine, or by persecuting believers, and other suggestions still more curious, are needlessly far-fetched. John viii. 44, and 1 John iii. 15, are not strictly apposite: these ungodly men may have hated and persecuted the righteous, but St. Jude does not tell us so. Sensuality is always selfish, but by no means always ill-natured or malignant.

Ran greedily after the

error of Balaam for reward.—The Greek for "ran greedily" literally means "they were poured out in streams;" the Greek for "error" may also mean "deception." Hence three renderings are possible: (1) as the Authorised version; (2) "they ran greedily after the deception of Balaam's reward;" (3) "they were undone by the deception of Balaam's reward." The first is best. "Reward" in the Greek is the genitive of *price*. Comp. "the rewards of divination" (Num. xxii. 7); "they hired against thee Balaam" (Deut. xxiii. 4; Neh. xiii. 2). Here, again, far-fetched explanations may be avoided. The allusion lies on the surface—running counter to God's will from interested motives. Possibly, there may also be some allusion to Balaam's causing the Israelites to be seduced into licentiousness (Rev. ii. 14).

Perished in the gainsaying of Core—*i.e.*, through gainsaying like that of Korah; referring to his *speaking against* Moses in the revolutionary opposition which he headed. These libertines, like Korah, treated sacred ordinances with contempt.

The triplet in this verse, like that in verse 8, is parallel to the three examples of God's vengeance, verses 5—7. Cain, like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, outraged the laws of nature; Balaam, like the impure angels, despised the sovereignty of God; Korah, like those who disbelieved the re-

the gainsaying of Core.

⁽¹²⁾ These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they

feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they* are without

port of the spies, spoke evil of dignities.

⁽¹²⁻¹⁹⁾ Three-fold description of the ungodly, corresponding to the three examples just given. The divisions are clearly marked, each section beginning with "These are" (verses 12, 16, 19).

⁽¹²⁻¹⁵⁾ Description corresponding to Cain.

⁽¹²⁾ **These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you.**—Rather, *These are the rocks in your feasts of charity, banqueting with you fearlessly* (see next Note); or, *These are they who banquet together fearlessly, rocks in your feasts of charity.* The former is preferable. But in any case we must probably read *rocks*—i.e., that on which those who meet them at your love-feasts will be wrecked (see Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 20-22)—not "spots," which is borrowed from 2 Pet. ii. 13. But it is just possible that as *spiloi*, St. Peter's word, may mean either "spots" or "rocks" (though most commonly the former), so St. Jude's word (*spilades*) may mean either "spots" or "rocks" (though almost invariably the latter). In an Orphic poem of the fourth century, *spilades* means "spots"; but this is rather late authority for its use in the first century. Here "rocks" is the safer translation. St. Peter is dwelling on the sensuality of these sinners, and for him "spots" is the more obvious metaphor. St.

Jude, in tracing an analogy between them and Cain, would be more likely to select "rocks." These libertines, like Cain, turned the ordinances of religion into selfishness and sin: both, like sunken rocks, destroyed those who unsuspectingly approached them. On the difference of reading respecting the word for "feasts of charity," or "love-feasts," see Note on 2 Pet. ii. 13. Possibly the name *Agape* for such feasts comes from this passage. Had it been common when St. Paul wrote 1 Cor. xi., he would probably have made a point of it; love-feasts in which there was no love. (Comp. 1 Pet. v. 14.)

Feeding themselves without fear.—"Without fear" goes better with "feasting with you"; but the Greek admits of either construction. "Feeding themselves" instead of the poorer members of the flock; whereas feeding the poor was one great object of the love-feasts. Others explain, "feeding themselves" (literally, *pasturing themselves*) instead of waiting to be tended by the shepherds. The former is better, the scandal being similar to that described in 1 Cor. xi. 21. (Comp. Isa. lvi. 11, which St. Jude may possibly have had in his mind; and see above, second Note on verse 8.)

Clouds without water.—Comp. Prov. xxv. 14. The meaning is not that these men bring much food to the love-feasts and give nothing away: there is no longer any allusion to the love-

water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; ⁽¹³⁾ raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering

stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his

feasts. Rather, these men are ostentatious generally, and yet do no good: inflated and empty. (See on 2 Pet. ii. 17.)

Carried about of winds.—More literally, *borne past* (without giving any rain) *by winds*; or, perhaps, *driven out of their course* (and so showing their flimsiness) *by winds*.

Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit.—There is no such strange contradiction in the Greek, nor in any of the earlier English versions. The meaning rather is, *autumn trees* (which ought to be full of fruit, and yet are) *without fruit*; in allusion, probably, to the barren fig-tree. Others, less simple, explain "trees in late autumn"—i.e., stripped and bare. But for this we should expect "winter trees" rather than "autumn trees."

Twice dead.—Utterly dead, and hence "plucked up by the roots." Spiritually these men were "twice dead" in having returned, after baptism, to the death of sin. The writer piles up metaphor on metaphor and epithet on epithet in the effort to express his indignation and abhorrence. The epithets here are in logical order: in autumn, fruitless, dead, rooted up.

⁽¹³⁾ **Foaming out their own shame.**—More literally, *shames*; their shameful acts. Isa. lvii. 20 is

probably in St. Jude's mind: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

Wandering stars.—Nothing is gained by understanding comets, which have their orbits, and do not wander in St. Jude's sense, any more than planets do. The image is that of stars leaving their place in the heavens, where they are beautiful and useful, and wandering away (to the utter confusion of every one who directs his course by them) into sunless gloom, where their light is extinguished, and whence they cannot return. This simile suits the "false teachers" of 2 Peter better than the "ungodly" of Jude. Would the writer of 2 Peter have neglected to avail himself of it?

⁽¹⁴⁾ **And Enoch also.**—On the *Book of Enoch*, and this famous quotation from it, see *Excursus* at the end of the Epistle. The following passage from Irenæus (IV. xvi. 2) shows that he was acquainted with the book, and throws light on St. Jude's use of it:—"Enoch also, pleasing God without circumcision, was God's ambassador to the angels, although he was a man, and was raised to heaven, and is preserved even until now as a witness of the just judgment of God. For the angels by transgression fell to earth for judgment, while a man, by

saints, ⁽¹⁵⁾ to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed,

and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. ⁽¹⁶⁾ These are murderers, complainers, walking after their own lusts;

pleasing God, was raised to heaven for salvation." The mission of Enoch to the fallen angels is narrated in the *Book of Enoch*, xii.—xvi.

The seventh from Adam.—This is not inserted without special meaning. It was scarcely needed to distinguish the son of Jared from the son of Cain; in that case it would have been more simple to say, "the son of Jared." It either points to the extreme antiquity of the prophecy, or else to the mystical and sabbatical number seven. Enoch (see preceding Note) was a type of perfected humanity, and hence the notion of "divine completion and rest" is perhaps suggested here. Thus, Augustine, in his reply to Faustus the Manichæan (XII. xiv.):—"Enoch, the seventh from Adam, pleased God and was translated, as there is to be a seventh day of rest, in which all will be translated who during the sixth day of the world's history are created anew by the incarnate Word." Several of the numbers connected with Enoch in Genesis seem to be symmetrical, and intended to convey a meaning.

With ten thousands of his saints.—Or, among His holy myriads—i.e., encircled by them. (Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 2; Heb. xii. 22.)

⁽¹⁵⁾ **To execute judgment.**—The Greek phrase occurs only here and John v. 27.

To convince.—Better, to convict. (Comp. John viii. 46, and see Notes on John xvi. 8, and on 1 Cor. xiv. 24.) The words "among them" must be omitted, as wanting in authority.

Hard speeches.—Comp. John vi. 60, the only other place where this epithet is applied to words. The meaning is somewhat similar in each case: harsh, repulsive, inhuman. It does not mean "hard to understand." Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 3) has this epithet with the LXX., where the Authorised version has "churlish." In the Ethiopic version of the *Book of Enoch* there appears to be nothing to represent "hard speeches . . . spoken" in this passage.

⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁸⁾ Description corresponding to Balaam.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Complainers.**—Literally, *discontented with their lot*. Men who "shape their course according to their own lusts" can never be content, for (1) the means of gratifying them are not always present, and (2) the lusts are insatiable. Such was eminently the case with Balaam, in his cupidity and his chafing against the restraints which prevented him from gratifying it. There is a possible reference to this verse in the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Sim. IX. xix. 3).

Great swelling words.—See Note on 2 Pet. ii. 18.

and their mouth speaketh
greatswelling words, having
men's persons in admira-
tion because of advantage.

(17) But, beloved, remember
ye the words which were

spoken before of the
apostles of our Lord Jesus
Christ; ⁽¹⁸⁾ how that they
told you there should be
mockers in the last time,
who should walk after

Having men's persons in
admiration.—More simply, *ad-
miring persons* (so the Rhemish ver-
sion)—i.e., having regard to people
of distinction, as Balaam to Balak.
These ungodly men were courtiers,
flatterers, and parasites.

Because of advantage.—*For
the sake of advantage*—i.e., to gain
something by it: like “for reward”
(verse 11). Exactly Balaam's case.
Note that each half of the verse
falls into an irregular triplet.

(17) But, beloved.—Better, as
in verse 20, *But ye, beloved*. “Ye”
is emphatic in both cases: “ye,”
in contrast to these impious men.
All previous English versions insert
the “ye.” While taking the form
of an exhortation, the passage still
remains virtually descriptive. “Be
not ye deceived by their impudent
boasting and interested pandering,
for these are the scoffing sensualists
against whom the Apostles warned
you.”

Spoken before of the
Apostles.—The old use of “of”
for “by,” like “carried about of
winds” (verse 12). (Comp. 2 Pet.
ii. 19.) St. Jude implies that this
warning of the Apostles is well
known to those whom he addresses.
This appeal to the authority of
Apostles would be more naturally
made by one who was not an
Apostle, but cannot be regarded as
decisive. See *Introduction*, I., and
Note on 2 Pet. iii. 2, to which,
however, this is not quite parallel,

for the writer there has already
declared himself to be an Apostle
(2 Pet. i. 1). There is nothing to
show that the author of our Epistle
regards the Apostles as consid-
erably removed in time from himself.
“In the last time” is *their* expres-
sion, not his; and by it *they* did
not mean any age remote from
themselves. (Comp. 1 John ii.
18; 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 6; Heb. i. 2,
1 Pet. i. 20.)

(18) How that they told you.
—Or, perhaps, *used to tell you*; but
we cannot infer from this that oral
teaching exclusively is meant.
This, again, leaves the question of
the writer's position open. Had
St. Jude written “how that they
told us,” it would have been deci-
sive against his being an Apostle.

There should be mockers.
—Better, *that there shall be scoffers*.
The quotation is direct, and is
introduced formally by a word
which in Greek commonly precedes
a direct quotation. This, however,
scarcely amounts to proof that
the quotation is from a written
document. The word for “mock-
ers” here is the same as that trans-
lated “scoffers” in 2 Pet. iii. 3.
The translation should be the same
in both passages.

In the last time.—These
words had better come first: *that
in the last time there shall be
scoffers*.

Who should walk after
their own ungodly lusts.—

their own ungodly lusts.

(19) These be they who

separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Better, *walking according to their own lusts of impieties*. The force of the genitive may be merely adjectival, as the Authorised version renders it: but as it may indicate the things lusted for, it is better to keep a literal rendering of it.

(19) Description corresponding to Korah.

(19) **These be they.**—Better, *These are they*—for the sake of making the openings of verses 12, 16, and 19 exactly alike, as they are in the Greek.

Who separate themselves.—“Themselves” must be omitted, the evidence against it being overwhelming. “Who separate:” who are creating a schism, like Korah and his company; claiming to be the chief and most enlightened members in the community to which they still profess to belong, though they turn upside down its fundamental principles. The context rather leads us to suppose that these libertines claimed to be the only “spiritual” Christians, inasmuch as they said that to their exalted spiritual natures the things of sense were purely indifferent, and might be indulged in without loss or risk; while they taunted other Christians, who regulated their conduct carefully with regard to such things, with being *psychic* or “sensuous.” Note the three-fold division of the verse.

Sensual.—The Greek word is *psychic*, and has no English equivalent; “sensuous” would perhaps be best. The LXX. do not use it, but it occurs six times in the New

Testament. Four times (1 Cor. ii. 14; xv. 44, 46) it is translated “natural” (see Note on 1 Cor. ii. 14); once (Jas. iii. 15), “sensual,” with “natural” in the margin; and here simply “sensual.” In 1 Cor. xv. 44, 46, the moral meaning is in the background; in the other three passages the moral meaning is prominent, and is distinctly bad. *Psychic* is the middle term of a triplet of terms, “carnal, *psychic*, spiritual.” “Carnal” and “spiritual” speak for themselves—the one bad, the other good. *Psychic*, which comes between, is much closer to “carnal,” and with it is opposed to “spiritual.” This is more clearly seen in the Latin equivalents—*carnalis, animalis, spiritalis*. The carnal man is ruled by his passions, and rises little above the level of the brutes. The psychic man is ruled by human reasoning, and human affections, and does not rise above the world of sense. The spiritual man is ruled by his spirit—the noblest part of his nature—and this is ruled by the Spirit of God. He rises to and lives among those things which can only be “spiritually discerned.” Our Christian psychology is seriously affected by the absence of any English word for *psychic*—the part of man’s nature which it represents is often lost sight of.

Having not the Spirit.—Or, perhaps, *because they have no spirit*. The Holy Spirit may be meant, although the Greek word has no article; but more probably spiritual power and insight is what is meant. These men had allowed

(20) But ye, beloved, building
 up yourselves
 on your most
 holy faith,

Verses 20 — 23.
 Final exhorta-
 tions.

praying in the Holy Ghost,
 (21) keep yourselves in the
 love of God, looking for the
 mercy of our Lord Jesus

the spiritual part of their nature, of which they talked so much, to become so buried in the mire of sensual indulgence and human self-sufficiency, that it was utterly inoperative and practically non-existent. The form of negative used in the Greek seems to imply that their "having no spirit" is the reason why they are justly called "sensuous."

Each of these three descriptions (verses 12—15, 16—18, and 19) is shorter than the preceding one. The writer hurries through an unpalatable subject to the more pleasing duty of exhorting those faithful Christians for whose sake he is writing.

(20, 21) Exhortation to strengthen themselves in the faith by prayer, godliness, and hope.

(20) But ye, beloved.—Exactly as in verse 17: "ye" in emphatic contrast to these sensuous and unspiritual men.

Building up yourselves.—Making yourselves firm on the sure foundation of faith, in contradistinction to those "who separate," and fancy themselves firm in their impious conceits. The notion is not so much that of increasing and completing an edifice as of strengthening its foundations. Faith and its object are here almost identified. To have faith as one's foundation is the same as having Christ as one's foundation. "Your faith," that which has been "once

for all delivered" to you (verse 4). "*Most Holy faith*," as opposed to the most unholy quicksands of the doctrines condemned in this Epistle.

Praying in the Holy Ghost.—Only in this way can Christians make firm their foundation. The Greek admits of "in the Holy Ghost" being taken with the previous clause; but our version is better. The expression "praying in the Holy Ghost" is not found elsewhere. It means that we pray in His strength and wisdom; He moves our hearts and directs our petitions. (See Notes on Rom. viii. 26.)

(21) **Keep yourselves in the love of God.**—Not our love of God, but His love of us. Consequently it is not the case that the three great Christian virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity—are inculcated here, although at first sight we are tempted to think so. God's love is the region in which those who are built up on faith, and supported by prayer, may continually dwell.

The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The mercy which He will show as Judge at the Last Day. By prayer in the Spirit we are kept in the love of the Father for the mercy of the Son.

Unto eternal life.—These words may be taken either with "keep yourselves," or with "looking," or with "mercy": best with "keep yourselves."

Christ unto eternal life.

(22) And of some have compassion, making a difference: (23) and others save

with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (24) Now unto him

(22, 23) Exhortation to treat these libertines with discrimination, making three classes.

(22) And of some have compassion, making a difference.

—The evidence is very strong in favour of a widely different reading: *And some indeed convict* (verse 15) *when they are in doubt* (Matt. xxi. 21; Acts x. 20; xi. 12; Rom. iv. 20; xiv. 23; Jas. i. 6); or, *when they contend with you* (verse 9; Acts xi. 2); or, *when they separate from you*. The first seems best, though the second also makes excellent sense, and has verse 9 in its favour. This, then, is the first and least hopeless class—those who are still in doubt, though inclined the wrong way. They may still be remonstrated with, convicted of error, and reclaimed (Matt. xviii. 15; Titus i. 13; Jas. v. 20). Some would make this first class the worst and most hopeless—those who are to be argued down in disputation, but without much chance of success. Such interpreters make the third class the best: those who can probably be saved by gentle means. The Greek here is so ambiguous that we cannot be certain of the meaning. But the addition of “in fear,” and “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” to the directions respecting the third class, seems to indicate that that class is the worst.

(23) And others save with fear.—“With fear” must certainly be omitted as no part of the

true text. “Save” should perhaps be *try to save*. It is the present imperative, not the aorist.

Pulling them out of the fire.

—Better, *Snatching them out of the fire*. We have here another reminiscence of Zech. iii. 1—3: we had one in verse 9. (Comp. Amos iv. 11.) The fire of the judgment to come is probably not meant; rather the imminent danger (as of one who is asleep in a burning house) in which the fire of their sins keeps them. This is the second class: those who can still be rescued, but by strong measures.

After the words, “out of the fire,” we must insert another clause omitted from the inferior Greek texts used by our translators: “and on others have compassion in fear.” Wiclif and the Rhemish version, following the Vulgate, have this clause. This is the third and worst class: those on whom profound pity is all that we dare bestow, and that in fear and trembling, lest by contact with them we may be brought within the influence of the deadly contamination that clings to all their surroundings. Abhorrence must be shown to the very externals of pollution. (Comp. 1 Cor. v. 11; 1 Tim. v. 22; Titus iii. 10, 11; 1 John v. 16; 2 John, verses 10, 11.)

(24, 25) Concluding Doxology.

(24) Now unto him that is able.—Comp. the conclusion Rom.

that is able to keep you
Verses 24, 25. from falling,
Doxology. and to pre-

sent you faultless before the
presence of his glory with
exceeding joy, ⁽²⁵⁾ to the

xvi. 25. It would be rash to infer from the similarity that St. Jude must have known the Epistle to the Romans; although there is nothing incredible in the supposition that he was acquainted with it. The Epistle had been in circulation probably for some ten years before St. Jude wrote. Doxologies, no doubt, became elastic formulas from the first.

To keep you from falling.—Better, *to keep you unfallen*. From his own warnings, denunciations, and exhortations, which have been severe and sombre throughout, St. Jude turns in joyous, exulting confidence to Him who alone can make them effectual. "Keep you," or, *guard you*; not the more general word translated "preserved" in verse 1, but another more in harmony with the present context, as indicating *protection* against the great perils just pointed out. A reading of much authority has "them" for "you"—*to keep them unfallen*. If it be correct, it may be explained as being in thought, though not in form, addressed to God, so that those to whom he is writing are spoken of in the third person.

Before the presence of his glory.—The glory that shall be revealed at the day of judgment. The meaning is, "Who can bring it to pass that you stand blameless before the judgment-seat" (Col. i. 22; 1 Thess. iii. 13).

⁽²⁵⁾ **To the only wise God our Saviour.**—The coupling of "Saviour" with "God" is com-

mon in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. i. 1; ii. 3; Titus i. 3; ii. 10; iii. 4). "Wise" must be omitted as wanting in authority. (See Note on Rom. xvi. 27.) Doxologies became well-known forms with many variations: changes to something more familiar to the copyist might easily be made in transcribing.

After "Saviour" must be inserted, on the highest MS. authority, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Wiclif and the Rhemish have the missing clause.

Glory and majesty, dominion and power.—Omit the first "and." "Glory" and "dominion" are frequent in the New Testament doxologies: the Greek words represented by "majesty" and "power" occur here only. After "power" we must supply, on overwhelming authority, "before all time." Consequently "is" may be substituted for "be" before "glory;" but no verb is needed.

Both now and ever.—Better, *and now and to all the ages*; so that the whole will run thus: *To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and to all the ages*. Thus we have a most comprehensive phrase for eternity—before time, time, after time—and thus the three-fold arrangement runs through to the very end.

Amen.—Common ending of a doxology. (Rom. i. 25; 1 Pet. iv. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 18.) These un-

only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty, do-

minion and power, both
now and ever. Amen.

godly men may "despise dominion,
and speak evil of dignities," may
utter "great swelling words"
about their own knowledge and
liberty, and scoff at those who
walk not with them; but still,

ages before they were born, and
ages after they have ceased to be,
glory, majesty, dominion, and
power belong to Him who saves us,
and would save even them, through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

EXCURSUS ON NOTES TO JUDE.

ON THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

THE precise place in history to which this intensely interesting relic belongs is a riddle of which the answer is as yet only very partially known. But the results of investigations during the present century have shown that the attention paid to the *Book of Enoch* in the second, third, and fourth centuries was fully justified. It is strange that such a book should have been allowed to pass out of sight. The canonical Book of Revelation inspired Christians, just as the Book of Daniel inspired Jews, with a love of revelations, visions, and prophecies, which was at times insatiable, and which has produced a mass of literature of which we could spare a great deal in exchange for something more solid. Men were so busy divining the future that they forgot to record the present and the past.

And yet a book so eminently in harmony with this taste was suffered to perish. This is all the more strange, because judgment, hell, and heaven are among the main subjects of the book, and the end of the world was precisely the favourite subject of speculation among Christians from the fourth to the tenth century. Moreover, there was the passage in Jude, to say nothing of notices in the Fathers, to keep the book from

being forgotten. Perhaps the reason was that just the two *data* by which men expected to determine the approach of the end of the world—the downfall of Rome and the coming of Antichrist—are not hinted at in the *Book of Enoch*. Be this as it may, the fact remains that from the fourth to the eighteenth century the book was entirely lost in Western Europe. Some fragments preserved in Greek in the *Chronographia* of Georgius Syncellus (circ. A.D. 800) show that the book was known in Eastern Christendom much later than in the West; but after that we lose all trace of it. Early in the seventeenth century it was rumoured that an Ethiopic version of it existed in Abyssinia. These rumours ended in disappointment. But in 1773 James Bruce brought back from Abyssinia three MSS. of the Ethiopic version. Silvestre de Sacy published a Latin translation of some of the early chapters in 1800; and in 1821 Archbishop Lawrence published an English translation of the whole, followed by the Ethiopic text in 1838. Since then the study of the book has been almost confined to Germany, where Hofmann, Gfrörer, Lützelberger, Lücke, Dillmann, Ewald, Köstlin, Hilgenfeld, Weisse, Volkmar, and Philippi, have all contributed to the subject;

Dillmann far the most. The results are anything but harmonious; but something has been ascertained on which reliance can be placed.

The Ethiopic is a translation from the Greek, and the Greek (of which only the portion preserved by Georgius Syncellus is known) is probably a translation from the Aramaic. A Hebrew *Book of Enoch* was in existence as late as the thirteenth century, but we have no certainty that it was identical with the existing work. A more secure ground for believing in an Aramaic original is the fact that many of the proper names come from Aramaic roots. The Ethiopic version is both redundant and defective: redundant in containing repetitions which can scarcely be intentional; defective, inasmuch as not even all that Georgius Syncellus has preserved is contained in it. The repetitions may possibly be the result of unintelligent copying, different recensions being clumsily strung together.

All are agreed that the book is not all by one hand. In the main it probably is so; but the author seems to have incorporated portions of other works; and it is suspected that the volume, as thus formed, has since been interpolated. To distinguish the earlier fragments and the later additions from the main body of the work, and to assign dates to each, is the great problem that still remains to be worked out. Very wide differences of opinion exist on the subject, but there is considerable agreement in assigning the main body of the book to B.C. 150—110. Lücke at first believed that the book was composed after the Christian era; but in the second edition of his *Einleitung in die Offenbarung Johannis*

(Bonn, 1852) he abandoned this view, and placed the first and last parts in the Maccabæan period, and assigned the central part—i.e., the parables—to about B.C. 40. Hofmann, Weisse, and Philippi have since taken up the theory of a post-Christian origin, but it has not met with much favour. Volkmar seems to stand alone in maintaining that the book was the work of disciples of the great Rabbi Akiba, and was written to incite people to join the standard of the impostor, Bar-Cochba, in his revolt against Hadrian, A.D. 132. Information on the subject for English readers is best derived from Lawrence's translation and preliminary dissertation, the article by Westcott in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, and that by Lipsius in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, from which sources much of the above is taken. See also Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 93.

The essentially Jewish character of the whole book is manifest, although it may contain Christian interpolations. There is no doctrine of the Trinity, and nothing distinctly Christian. Of the Incarnation, the name Jesus, the life on earth, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, of Baptism, and the Eucharist, there is not a trace. The Messiah is the Son of Man (*passim*), the Son of woman (lxi. 9), the Elect (*passim*), whom the Lord of spirits seats on the throne of His glory to judge "in the word of the name of the Lord of spirits" (lx. 10, 11; lxxviii. 39); but he is not the Word, he is not God.

These facts suffice to show that the book as a whole is Jewish, and not Christian. On the other hand, the absence of antagonism to Chris-

tianity seems to show that the book was not written after the Christian era. Volkmar's theory, that it was written in the interests of the false Messiah, Bar-Cochba, is rendered at once improbable by the fact that constant reference to the *Book of Enoch* is made in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. This work was known to Origen, and perhaps to Tertullian, and therefore cannot be later than A.D. 150—200. But it was probably written before A.D. 135, i.e., before that obliteration of the very walls and name of Jerusalem, which was the immediate result of Bar-Cochba's revolt. The author, a Jewish Christian, attacks the idea that Jewish ceremonial is still binding; and is perpetually reminding the Jews that the Messiah is not only a King, but a Priest, and a Priest to whom the Aaronic priesthood must resign. This idea does not at all suit the half century following Hadrian's destruction of Jerusalem; for that event put an end to the danger of Jewish ceremonial overgrowing Christianity. Whereas before that event the danger of a relapse into Judaism was, for the Church in Palestine, a very real one. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* may be placed A.D. 100—135; and consequently the *Book of Enoch* must be placed earlier still. (Comp. Dorner's *Person of Christ*, i., pp. 152, 417, 420.)

It is well worth while to read the whole of Lawrence's translation. Those who do so cannot fail to be often struck with the dignity and beauty even of this translation of a translation. Not unfrequently they will come upon something which reminds them of 2 Peter or Jude. The resemblance

is often of the faintest—a couple of words in altogether different context, or a similar thought very differently expressed. It would be strange if all these resemblances were purely accidental; and an opportunity of forming an opinion on this question is given in the following pages, where specimens of these resemblances are tabulated.

The impression which this fact conveys is that the writer of these Epistles, or at least one of them, was well acquainted with the *Book of Enoch*, and that it suggested sometimes a thought, sometimes a phrase to him. It is possible, however, that all three writers may have derived material from a common source. These questions can scarcely be settled finally until a Greek copy of the book comes to light, an event by no means to be despaired of in an age in which so many literary treasures have been recovered.

The book is evidently the work of a man of the most earnest convictions: one who believes in God and fears Him, and is appalled at the practical infidelity and utter godlessness which he finds around him. There are two things on which he is never tired of insisting: (1) that God's rule extends everywhere, over men and angels no less than over winds and stars; (2) that this rule is a moral one, for He bounteously rewards righteousness and fearfully punishes sin. Nothing, therefore, could well be more in harmony with the spirit and purpose of St. Jude; and it ought not to surprise us that he makes use of such a work. Whether or no he was aware of the apocryphal nature of the book, we have no means of determining. Neither alternative need startle us

—that he should have been mistaken on such a point, or should knowingly have quoted an uncanonical book. St. Paul was not afraid to quote heathen poets.

It may reassure us in any case to remember that, in spite of the quotation in St. Jude, the mind of Christ's Church has never wavered as to the true nature of the *Book of Enoch*. It is one of the many eccentricities of Tertullian that he upholds its authority; but he is alone in doing so. His argument is so curious as to be worth summarising:—"I am quite aware that some reject the book, and that it is not in the Jewish canon. I suppose people think that it could never have survived the deluge. But might not Noah have heard and remembered it all? or have been inspired to repeat it, just as Ezra is believed to have restored the Jewish literature lost in the destruction of Jerusalem? Nothing must be rejected which really concerns us; and we read that every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired. The Jews reject it, as they reject other

things, because it tells of Christ" (*De Cultu Fem.*, I. iii.).

It is not quite certain whether Justin Martyr knew it or not. In *Apol.* II., v., he gives in few words an account of the fall of the angels, and the consequences of it, very similar to that in the *Book of Enoch*, vi.—xvi. Justin and the author of the book may have got this from a common source; but, in any case, Justin's accepting the account is no proof that he accepted the book as of any authority. Origen and Augustine distinctly mark it as apocryphal, and it is included in no list of the Scriptures, whether Jewish or Christian.

The question still remains—*does* St. Jude quote this book? More than one critic answers in the negative, maintaining that he merely quotes a traditional saying of Enoch, which the author of the *Book of Enoch* inserted. Of course this is possible; but, as the book was in existence when St. Jude wrote, was probably well known, and contains the passage quoted, the more reasonable view is that St. Jude quotes from the book.

EXCURSUS.

TABULATED SPECIMENS OF PARALLELS BETWEEN THE BOOK OF ENOCH AND THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER AND THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

ENOCH.

2 PETER.

JUDE.

ii. Behold, He comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked and reprove all the carnal, for every thing which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against Him.

i. 8. *The splendour of the Godhead shall illuminate them.*

v. *The earth is scorched up with fervid heat.*

vi. 4, 5. You calumniate [*His*] greatness; and malignant are the words in your polluted mouths against His majesty. *Ye withered in heart, no peace shall be unto you.*

vii. 1, 2. It happened, after the sons of men had multiplied in those days, that daughters were born to them, elegant and beautiful. And when *the angels, the sons of heaven*, beheld them, they became enamoured of them, saying

- - - - -

i. 17. *The excellent glory.*

iii. 10. The elements shall be dissolved *with fervent heat, the earth also.*

ii. 10. They are not afraid to *speak evil of dignities.*

ii. 4. For if God spared not *the angels that sinned.*

14, 15. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

8. Despise dominion, and *speak evil of dignities.*

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not.

12. Without fruit, *twice dead, plucked up by the roots.*

6. And *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.*

EXCURSUS.

to each other; Come, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children.

x. 26. Then shall *the children of the earth be righteous.* (Comp. l. 5: *The earth shall rejoice; the righteous shall inhabit it, and the elect possess it.*)

xiv. 9. *Clouds* and a *mist* invited me; *agitated stars* . . . pressed me forwards.

xv. 7. Therefore I made not wives for you [angels], because, being spiritual, *your dwelling is in heaven.*

xviii. 16. Therefore *was He offended with them* [the angels], and *bound them, until the period of the consummation of their crimes in the secret year.* (Comp. xxi. 2, 3: I beheld . . . a desolate spot, prepared, and terrific. There too I beheld seven stars of heaven [angels] *bound in it together.* . . . These are those of the stars which have transgressed the commandment of the most high God; and are here bound, until the infinite number of the days of their crimes be completed. Comp. lxxxvii. 2, 3.)

xl. 8. The merciful, the patient, the holy Michael.

iii. 13. We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

ii. 17. *Mists* that are driven with the storm-wind.

- - - - -

ii. 4. If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

12. *Clouds* they are without water.

13. *Wandering stars.*

6. The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.

6. *He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

9. Michael

durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

EXCURSUS.

xli. 1. The sinners *who denied the Lord of glory.*

xliv. 2. Sinners *who deny the name of the Lord of spirits.* (Comp. xlvii. 11; lxvi. 12.)

xliv. 4, 5. I will *change the face of heaven. . . . I will also change the face of the earth; will bless it; and cause those whom I have elected to dwell upon it.*

liii. 8—10. All the waters, which are in the heavens and above them, shall be mixed together. The water which is above heaven shall be the agent; and the water which is under the earth shall be the recipient; and all shall be destroyed who dwell upon earth.

lviii. 4. Hitherto has existed the day of mercy; and He has been merciful and *long-suffering towards all who dwell on the earth.*

lxvi. 6. The valley of the angels, who had been guilty of seduction, *burned underneath its soil.* 15. The waters will be changed, and become *a fire which shall blaze for ever.*

lxviii. 39. Those who seduced them *shall be bound with chains for ever.*

ii. 1. Even *denying the Lord* that bought them.

iii. 13. We look for *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

iii. 5, 6. By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth consisting out of water and through water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

iii. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is *longsuffering to us-ward*, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

- - - - -

ii. 4. God spared not the angels that sinned, but . . . *delivered them into chains of darkness.*

4. *Denying the only Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

7. Sodom and Gomorrah . . . giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

6. The angels which kept not their first estate . . . *He hath reserved in everlasting chains.*

EXCURSUS.

lxxxii. 4—6. I saw in a vision heaven purifying and snatched away. . . . I saw likewise the earth absorbed by a great abyss, and mountains suspended over mountains. Hills were sinking upon hills, lofty trees were gliding off from their trunks and were . . . sinking into the abyss.

xcii. 17, 18. The former heaven shall depart and pass away; a new heaven shall appear. . . . Afterwards likewise shall there be many weeks, which shall externally exist in goodness and righteousness. Neither shall sin be named there for ever.

xcvi. 25. To them there shall be no peace; but they shall surely die suddenly.

xcvii. 1. Woe to them who act impiously, who laud and honour the word of falsehood.

cii. 7. You have been satiated with meat and drink, with human plunder and rapine, with sin, with the acquisition of wealth, and with the sight of good days.

cv. 13, 14. Behold, they committed crimes; laid aside their class, and intermingled with

iii. 10. The heavens shall pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, the earth also; and shall the works thereof be found?

iii. 10. The heavens shall pass away. 13. We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

ii. 1. Shall bring upon themselves swift destruction.

- - - - -

11. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.

12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. 16. Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

6. The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath re-

EXCURSUS.

women. With them delivered them into served in everlasting
also they transgressed ; chains of darkness, to chains.
married with them, and be reserved unto judg-
begot children. A ment ; and *spared not* —
great destruction there- the old world . . . bring-
fore shall come upon the ing in the flood upon the
earth ; a deluge, a great world of the ungodly.
destruction, shall take
place in one year.

INDEX.

- Alogi, The, 183.
 Angels, their insight into future things, 21; the fallen, not spared by God, 153, 274; dignity of angels, 158.
 Answer of a good conscience toward God, 86—88.
 Ascension, Christ's, 89.
 Asiatic Christians, not all poor, 65.
 Athanasius, 123.
 Augustine, 188.
 Authorship of St. Peter's First Epistle, 1; of Second Epistle, 121.
- B.
- Babylon, The Church of, 3, 4, 117.
 Balaam, 3, 122, 161, 278.
 Baptism, The flood a, 85.
 Basil, 123.
 Baur, 2, 187.
 Believers, Condition of, 36, 37, 43, 44.
 Benevolence recommended, 98.
 Brotherly love inculcated, 220.
- C.
- Cappadocia, 7.
 Carpocrates, the Gnostic, 184.
 Cassiodorus, 123.
 Cerinthus, 188, 198, 211, 228.
 Chosen generation, A, 43.
 Christ precious to the believer, 40.
 Christian, How to suffer as a, 104.
 Christianity, its rapid spread in Asia Minor, 7.
 Christians, so called by Suetonius, 48, 49.
- Christ's advent, 214.
 Christ's blood, Redemption by, 26, 27.
 Christ's resurrection and ascension, 88, 89.
 Christ's sufferings, an example to Christians, 56; benefit of, 59—61.
 Chrysostom, 123.
 Clement of Alexandria, 3, 123, 129, 184, 188, 195.
 Clement of Rome, 1, 123, 129, 146, 147, 168.
 Codex Sinaiticus, 170, 194.
 Confounded, The believer not, 40.
 Corner-stone, Christ the chief, 41.
 Corrupt doctrines, Warnings against, 151.
 Councils of Hippo, Laodicea, 123, 264.
 Courage in persecution, Exhortation to, 101.
 Crisis, Exhortations suggested by the, 108.
 Critics on 2 Peter, 132.
 Cyprian, 123, 194, 244.
 Cyril of Jerusalem, 123.
- D.
- Darkness, Manifestation of, 210—212.
 Day of Judgment, The, 274.
 Deceivers, Appearance of, 250.
 Demetrius, 257.
 Devil, The, 219.
 Diaspora, or dispersion, The, 46.
 Didymus of Alexandria, 123, 195.

INDEX

Difficult passages in St. John's
First Epistle, 191—195.

Diodorus of Tarsus, 195.

Dionysius of Alexandria, 244.

Diotrephes, 246, 255, 257.

Disobedient spirits, Christ preaching to, 82, 83.

Divine Birth, The, 216, 217.

Divine inspiration, 149.

Docketists, The, 298.

Doubts as to the authenticity of
2 Peter, 123; how explained,
123, 124.

Duties of husbands to wives, 68—
70.

E.

Earth, Burning of the, 172.

Earthly rulers, Obedience to, 50,
53.

Elect, the term used for Christians,
7.

Elect lady, or lady Electa, 244,
248.

Enoch, 280, 281.

Enoch, Book of, 265, 280, 288—
291.

Ephrem Syrus, 123, 244, 264.

Epistle of Barnabas, 139, 170.

Eusebius, 2, 3, 183, 184, 186, 202,
244, 245, 264.

Ewald, 184.

Eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty,
The Apostles, 145.

F.

Faith delivered to the saints, Con-
tention for, 271.

Faith, The trial of, 13; the end of,
13, 14; the test of love, 233.

False teachers and scoffers, 131;
prediction of, 150.

Final dissolution of Nature, 171,
172.

Firmilian of Cæsarea, 123.

Fleshly lusts, Abstinence from, en-
forced, 47.

Foreknowledge of God, 7

G.

Gaius, 254, 257, 258.

Galatia, 7.

Gentile opposition, 48.

Gentiles, Sins of the, 92, 93.

Genuineness of First Epistle of
Peter, 1; of Second Epistle,
121.

German critics on St. Peter and St.
John's Epistles, 3, 41, 132, 133,
186, 187, 189, 195, 244.

God's long-suffering, 84.

Good conscience, A, 78.

Gospel preached to the dead, 94—
98.

Grass, All flesh is, 31, 32.

Greek commonly spoken in Gali-
lee, 1.

Gregory Nazianzen, 123.

Grotius, 121, 244.

Growth in grace, St. Peter's ex-
hortation to, 179; in holiness,
14.

H.

Hard sayings of St. Peter, 92, 95—
98.

Headstone of the corner, The, 42.

Heathen hostility, Prudent rules
for, 46.

Heavenly Builder, The, 36, 37,
39.

Hegesippus, 264.

Hippolytus, 123, 149, 170.

Holiness, Incitements to, 24.

Holy men, Inspiration of, 149.

Hospitality, Exhortations to, 99.

Human ordinances, Submission to,
49, 50.

Husbands attracted by the wives,
65.

I.

Ignatius, 129.

Incorruptible inheritance, The, 10,
11.

Ink and paper, 252.

Irenæus, 2, 123, 165, 170, 184,
244.

J.

Jerome, 123—125, 244.
 Jesus Christ, The Lord, 8, 9.
 Jude, Epistle of, 269—287; introduction, 263—268.
 Jude, The name, 269.
 Justin Martyr, 123, 151, 170, 172, 184.

K.

Kyria, 248.

L.

Last warnings of St. John, 239.
 Light, God is, 199—214.
 Literature of St. John's Epistles, 195, 196, 246.
 Lot, Deliverance of, 155, 156.
 Love. God is, 215—238; glorious results of love realised through Christ, 223—225; no fear in love, 232.

M.

Marcion, 1, 183.
 Masters, Servants' submission to their, 53.
 Meek and quiet spirit, Ornament of a, 66.
 Melito, 123, 169.
 Muratorian Canon, 123, 184, 243, 264.

N.

New heavens and new earth, The, 174.
 New Israel, Exhortation to realise the idea of the, 33.
 Noah's flood, Eight persons saved in, 85.

O.

Old and new commandment, The, 205.
 Origen, 1, 123, 244, 264.

P.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, 2, 3, 184, 244.

Parallels between the Book of Enoch, 2 Peter, and Jude, 292—296.

Partial redemption, Conclusive argument against, 151.

Patmos, John banished to, 190.

Paul's Epistles, St. Peter's reference to, 175, 176.

Peculiar people, A, 44.

Perfect love, 232.

Pernicious doctrines, St. Peter's dread of, 93.

Persecution of the Christians, 4, 48.

Peschito Syriac version, 123, 184, 244, 264.

Peter, The name, 6.

Polycarp, 1, 2, 123, 129, 183, 244.

Pontine dispersion, The, 6.

Pontus, Galatia, 7.

Practical duties, Exhortation to, 71—74.

Priesthood, The new, 38, 43, 44.

Prophecy, not of private interpretation, 148.

Prophetic inspiration, 149.

Pseudo-Clement, 168.

Pure conscience, Exhortation to keep a, 74.

R.

Readers of St. John's Gospel, 188.

Redemption by Christ, a foredained plan, 28; eternal in its nature, 31; universality of, 203.

Regeneration, The, 9.

Rejectors of the Gospel, 41—43.

Renan, 2, 3.

Rome, 3, 4, 117.

Royal priesthood, A, 43.

Rufinus, 123.

S.

Salutations, St. Peter's, 6.

Sanctification, 8.

Sara, Example of, 67.

Sceptical arguments, Answers to, 168, 170.

Scoffers, St. Peter's allusions to, 167.

Shepherd of Hermas, 123, 160.

INDEX.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Silver and gold, St. Peter's con-
tempt for, 25.</p> <p>Sin, Divine forgiveness of, 201;
God's sons do not sin, 241.</p> <p>Sin unto death, The, 240.</p> <p>Spirit of Christ, The, 18.</p> <p>Spirits in prison, Christ preached
to disobedient, 82.</p> <p>Spirits, Trial of the, 226.</p> <p>Spiritual graces, St. Peter's exhor-
tations to progress in, 135—142.</p> <p>St. John, First Epistle of, 183—
242; introduction, 183—196.</p> <p>St. John, Second Epistle of, 243—
253; introduction, 243—246.</p> <p>St. John, Third Epistle of, 254—259.</p> <p>St. John's Gospel and Epistles,
Similarity of style between,
185.</p> <p>St. Peter, First Epistle of, 1—118;
introduction to, 1—5.</p> <p>St. Peter, Second Epistle of, 119—
180; introduction, 121—132;
its difficulties considered, 122.</p> <p>St. Peter's reasons for writing his
Epistle, 166.</p> <p>Stone of stumbling, and rock of
offence, Christ the, 42.</p> <p>Suffering wrongfully, Blessedness
of, 54, 55, 75.</p> <p>Sufferings of Christ, Benefit of, 18,
59—61, 102.</p> | <p>Sure foundation laid in Sion, The,
39.</p> <p>Symeon, for "Simon Peter," 133.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T.</p> <p>Tabernacle, The body compared to
a, 142.</p> <p>Temporal governors, Duty of sub-
mission to, 50.</p> <p>Tertullian, 14, 150, 184, 194, 264.</p> <p>Theodore of Mopsuestia, 123, 264.</p> <p>Theodoret, 123.</p> <p>Theophilus of Antioch, 2, 149.</p> <p>Transfiguration, St. Peter's refer-
ence to the, 145, 147.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">U.</p> <p>Ungodly and the sinner, Judgment
on the, 107.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W.</p> <p>Walking in the light, 207—210.</p> <p>Well-doing, Suffering for, 79.</p> <p>Wife, the weaker vessel, 69.</p> <p>Wives, Duty of subjection to their
husbands, 63; how to adorn
themselves, 67.</p> <p>Word of God, Living and abiding
power of, 31.</p> |
|--|---|

INDEX TO WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

Able to keep you from falling, 286.
 Abominable idolatries, 92.
 Above all things have fervent charity, 98.
 Abundant mercy, God's, 9.
 Acceptable with God = thank-worthy, 55.
 According as = seeing that, 135.
 Adornment of the wife, 64.
 Advocate with the Father, 202.
 After ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, 114.
 Against them that do evil, 74.
 All things continue as they were, 168.
 Angels and authorities subject unto Him, 89.
 Angels bring not railing accusations, 157, 158.
 Angels that kept not their first estate, 273, 274.
 Angels that sinned, God spared not the, 153.
 Anointing ye have received, 213.
 Answer = apology, 77.
 Answer of a good conscience toward God, 86.
 Antichrist, 193, 211.
 Appearing of Jesus Christ, 13.
 Are not afraid with any amazement, 68.
 Arm yourselves with the same mind, 90.
 As He is, so are we in this world, 231.

B.

Balaam rebuked for iniquity, 161.
 Rare our sins on the tree, Christ, 59, 60.

Be not afraid of their terror, 76.
 Be pitiful, courteous, not rendering evil, 72.
 Be sober, and watch unto prayer, 98.
 Be ye all of one mind, 71.
 Be ye holy, 24.
 Beginning, That which was from the, 197.
 Begotten again to a lively hope, 9.
 Begotten of God, 234; keepeth himself, 241.
 Being born again, 31.
 Better not known the way of righteousness, 164, 165.
 Bid him not God speed, 251.
 Blessed, 9.
 Born of God, sinneth not, 240.
 Both now and ever, 286.
 Brethren, Unfeigned love of the, 30.
 Brother of James, 269.
 Brotherly love, 192, 211.
 Buffeted for faults, 55.

C.

Cain, Balaam, Core, 278.
 Called, 270.
 Called out of darkness into marvellous light, 45.
 Called us unto His eternal glory, 114.
 Calling and election sure, 141.
 Came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, 235.
 Cannot see afar off, 140.
 Cast down into hell, 154.
 Casting all your care upon Him, 113.
 Chains of darkness, 154.
 Charity, 255.

INDEX.

- Charity shall cover a multitude of sins, 99.
- Chaste conversation of wives, 64.
- Chief Shepherd shall appear, 111.
- Children of thy elect sister, 253.
- Chosen generation, A, 43.
- Chosen of God, precious, 36.
- Christ also suffered for us, 56; once suffered, 79.
- Christ committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously, 58.
- Christ did no sin, 57.
- Christ also suffered, leaving us an example, 56.
- Church that is at Babylon, 117.
- Cloke of maliciousness, Not using Christian liberty for a, 52.
- Clothed with humility, 112.
- Clouds carried with a tempest, 162.
- Clouds without water, 279.
- Coming unto a living stone, 35.
- Commit their souls unto a faithful Creator, 107.
- Commandment of the Apostles of the Lord, 166.
- Committeth sin is of the devil, 219.
- Commandment, This is the, 250.
- Common salvation, The, 271.
- Complainers, 281.
- Confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh, 250.
- Confess our sins, faithful and just to forgive us our sins, 201.
- Contained in the scripture, 39.
- Conversation, 48.
- Corner-stone, Christ the chief, 41.
- Corruptible seed, 31.
- Corruptible things, Not redeemed with, 25.
- Corruptible, That which is not, 66.
- Creator, A faithful, 107.
- Crept in unawares, 271.
- Crown of glory that fadeth not away, 111.
- D.
- Damnable heresies, 151.
- Damnation slumbereth not, 153.
- Darkness is passed, the true light shineth, 205.
- Day dawn, Day Star arise, 148.
- Dead to sin, should live to righteousness, 61.
- Denying the Lord that bought them, 151.
- Denying the only Lord God, 272.
- Destroyed them that believed not, 273.
- Dignities, Speaking evil of, 157.
- Disallowed of men, 36.
- Disobedient, Sometime were, 83.
- Disputing about the body of Moses, 276.
- Do well, and suffer for it, 55.
- Doeth the will of God abideth for ever, 210.
- Doing good, doing evil, 258.
- Dumb ass forbad the madness, 162.
- E.
- Earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up, 172.
- Earth standing out of the water, 169.
- Eight souls were saved, 85.
- Elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, 108.
- Elect, The, 7.
- Elect lady, The, 247.
- Elements melt with fervent heat, 171, 173.
- End of all things is at hand, 98.
- Endure grief, suffering wrongfully, 54.
- Enoch, the seventh from Adam, 280, 281.
- Ensamples to the flock, 111.
- Entrance shall be ministered abundantly, 141.
- Escaped the pollutions of the world, 164.
- Eschew evil, 73.
- Established in the present truth, 142.
- Eternal life, 213.
- Even hereunto were ye called, 56.

INDEX.

Even so minister, 100.
 Evil-doers, Punishment of, 51;
 Speak against you as, 48.
 Excess of wine, 92.
 Exceeding great and precious
 promises, 136.
 Eye-witnesses of His majesty, 145.

F.

Faith and hope in God, Your, 29.
 Faith once delivered to the saints,
 271.
 Faith, The trial of your, 12; the
 end of, 14.
 Falling from stedfastness, 178.
 False prophets, false teachers, 150.
 Father, Calling on the, 24.
 Fathers, Young men, 208.
 Fear God, 53.
 Feed the flock of God, 109.
 Fellow-helpers to the truth, 256.
 Fellowship one with another, 200.
 Fiery trial which is to try you, 101.
 Filthy conversation of the wicked,
 155.
 Filthy dreamers, 275.
 Filthy lucre, 110.
 Flesh is grass, All, 31.
 Fleshly lusts, 47.
 Follow not evil, 257.
 Foolish men, Put to silence the
 ignorance of, 51.
 Foreknowledge of God, 7.
 Former lusts, Not fashioning your-
 selves according to, 23.
 Foreordained, Who verily was, 28.
 Foundation laid in Sion, The, 39.

G.

Gaius, 254, 257.
 Gird up the loins of your mind, 22.
 Give account to Him that is ready
 to judge, 94.
 Give diligence, 141.
 Giving all diligence, add to your
 faith virtue, 137.
 Giving honour unto the wife, 70.

Glorify God by your good works,
 49.
 Glory and virtue, 136.
 Glory that should follow Christ's
 sufferings, 19.
 God glorified through Jesus Christ,
 101.
 God is light, 199.
 God is love, 229, 231.
 Godliness, 136.
 God loves us, we ought to love one
 another, 230.
 God resisteth the proud, 112.
 God's commandment, to believe on
 His Son, 225.
 Going after strange flesh, 275.
 Gone into heaven, on the right
 hand of God, 89.
 Good conscience, A, 78.
 Good stewards of the manifold
 grace of God, 100.
 Gospel preached to the dead, 94--
 98.
 Grace and peace be multiplied, 135.
 Grace be multiplied, 9.
 Grace, mercy, and peace, 248.
 Grace of God wherein ye stand, 116.
 Great day, The, 274.
 Great price in the sight of God, 66.
 Greatly rejoice, 12.
 Guile, 73.

H.

Habitation, Angels that left their
 own, 274.
 Happened according to the true
 proverb, 165.
 Having compassion one on another,
 71.
 Having not the Spirit, 283.
 Heard, seen, handled, That which
 we have, 197, 198.
 Heavens pass away with a great
 noise, 171.
 Heaviness for a season, 12.
 He that believeth not God hath
 made Him a liar, 237.
 He that hath the Son hath life,
 238.

INDEX.

He that lacketh these things, 140.
 He that will love life, refrain his
 tongue from evil, 73.
 Heirs together of the grace of life,
 70.
 Hereunto called, Knowing that ye
 are, 72.
 Hidden man of the heart, 65.
 Him that is from the beginning,
 208.
 His word is not in us, 201.
 Holy Ghost sent down from
 heaven, 20.
 Holy men of God moved by the
 Holy Ghost, 149.
 Holy mount, In the, 146.
 Holy women adorned themselves,
 67.
 Honour all men, 52.
 Honour the King, 53.
 Hope that is in you, Reason of,
 78.
 Hope to the end, Be sober and, 22.
 Humble yourselves therefore, 112.
 Husbands, Likewise ye, 68.

I.

If any man speak or minister,
 100.
 If the righteous scarcely be saved,
 106.
 Inherit a blessing, Ye should, 73.
 Inheritance incorruptible, unde-
 filed, 11.
 In Him is no sin, 218.
 In time past were not a people, 45.

J.

Judged according to men in the
 flesh, but live according to God
 in the spirit, 95—98.
 Judgeth without respect of persons,
 25.
 Judgment begin at the house of
 God, 107.
 Just for the unjust, Christ suffered
 the, 79, 80.

K.

Keep yourselves in the love of God,
 284.
 Keeping His commandments, 203 ;
 not grievous, 234.
 Kēpt through faith unto salvation,
 11.
 Kings, Governors, 50.
 Kiss of charity, 118.
 Knowledge of Jesus our Lord,
 Through the, 135.

L.

Lamb without blemish or spot, 27.
 Lasciviousness, 92 ; turning grace
 of God into, 272.
 Last time, The, 192, 211.
 Latter end worse than the begin-
 ning, 164.
 Laying aside all guile, 33.
 Led away with the error of the
 wicked, 178.
 Let us love one another, 229.
 Liar, A, who denieth the Son, 212.
 Life was manifested, The, 198.
 Light shining in a dark place, 147.
 Little children, keep yourselves
 from idols, 242.
 Lively hope, 10, 22.
 Lively stones built up, 36.
 Living stone, Coming unto a, 35.
 Long-suffering of God waited, Once
 the, 84.
 Long-suffering of our Lord, 171,
 174.
 Lord cometh with ten thousand
 saints, 281.
 Lord knoweth the godly, 156.
 Lords over God's heritage, 110.
 Lot, that righteous man, 155, 156.
 Lot's deliverance, 155.
 Love as brethren, 72.
 Love of God for us, 222.
 Love not the world, 209.
 Love of God perfected, 204.
 Love of the Father is not in him,
 209.

INDEX.

Love one another, 221.
 Love the brotherhood, 53.
 Loveth his brother, Hateth his brother, 207.
 Loveth the pre-eminence, 257.
 Loving without seeing, 14.
 Lust of the flesh, eyes, pride of life, 210.
 Lust of uncleanness, 157.
 Lusts of the flesh, 163.

M.

Made to be taken and destroyed, 159.
 Make merchandise of you, 152.
 Manifested in these last times, 28, 29.
 Manifested to take away our sins, 218.
 Manifold grace of God, 100.
 Many false prophets gone out into the world, 227.
 Marcus, my son, 118.
 Masters, 54.
 Meekness and fear, 78.
 Mercy, peace, and love, 270.
 Michael the archangel, 276.
 Mockers in the last time, 282.
 More precious than gold, 13.
 More sure word of prophecy, 146.

N.

Natural brute beasts, 158.
 Neither barren nor unfruitful, 139.
 New commandment, that we love one another, 249.
 New heavens and new earth, 174.
 Newborn babes, 34.
 No fear in love, 232.
 No longer live in the flesh, 91
 No new commandment, 205.
 No prophecy is of any private interpretation, 148.
 Noah the eighth person, 154.
 Not followed cunningly devised fables, 144.
 Not slack concerning promises, God, 171.

O.

Obedient children, 23.
 Obey not the Gospel of God, 106.
 Obtained like precious faith, 133, 134.
 Of some have compassion, 285.
 Old commandment, 205.
 One day with the Lord a thousand years, 170.
 Ordained to this condemnation, 271.
 Our beloved brother Paul, 175.
 Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, 134.
 Our Lord Jesus Christ, 9.
 Overcome the wicked one, 208.

P.

Paper and ink, 252.
 Partaker of the glory to be revealed, 109.
 Partakers of the Divine nature, 136.
 Pass the time of your sojourning in fear, 25.
 Passed from death unto life, 222.
 Peculiar people, A, 44.
 Perish in their own corruption, 159.
 Power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 145.
 Prayers be not hindered, That your, 71.
 Praying in the Holy Ghost, 284.
 Preached to the spirits in prison, 82.
 Precious blood of Christ, Redeemed by the, 26, 27.
 Preserved in Jesus Christ, 270.
 Priesthood, An holy, 37.
 Promises, Great and precious, 136.
 Prophecy came not in old time, 149.
 Prophesying of the grace, 16.
 Prophets enquired and searched diligently, 16.
 Propitiation, 191; for our sins, 202.
 Pulling them out of the fire, 285.
 Purified your souls in obeying, 30.

INDEX

Put off this my tabernacle, 143.
 Put to death in the flesh, quickened
 by the Spirit, 81.
 Put you in remembrance, 273.
 Putting away the filth of the flesh,
 86.

Q.

Quickened by the Spirit, 81.

R.

Railing accusations, 277
 Raised Him from the dead, 39.
 Ready always to give answer, 77.
 Ready to be revealed, 11.
 Received honour and glory, 145.
 Receiving the end of your faith, 14.
 Record, This is the, eternal life,
 238.
 Reproached for the name of Christ,
 102.
 Reserved in everlasting chains, 274.
 Reserved in heaven for you, 11.
 Resurrection of Jesus Christ, By
 the, 88.
 Revealed in the last time, 11.
 Reviled not again, 57.
 Righteousness of God, Through
 the, 134.
 Roaring lion walketh about, 113.
 Royal priesthood, A, 43.

S.

Salvation, 11, 15.
 Salvation of your souls, 15.
 Sanctified, To them that are, 270.
 Sanctify the Lord God, 76.
 Same afflictions are accomplished
 in your brethren, 113.
 Scoffers in the last days, 167.
 See Him as He is, 216.
 Seek peace, and ensue it, 73.
 Separate themselves, sensual, 282.
 Servant and an apostle, A, 133.
 Servants, Masters, 54.
 Servants of God, The, 52.
 Servants of corruption, 163.

Shall not be confounded, He that
 believeth, 40.
 Sheep gone astray, 61; returned,
 62.
 Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,
 62.
 Show forth God's praises, 44.
 Shutteth up his bowels of compas-
 sion, 223.
 Silvanus, a faithful brother, 115.
 Sincere milk of the word, 34.
 Sin unto death, A, 240.
 Sins forgiven for His name's sake,
 208.
 Sins of the whole world, 293.
 Sodom and Gomorrah, 155.
 Son of the Father, The, 248.
 Son of God manifested to destroy
 the works of the devil, 219,
 220.
 Sons of God, Now are we the, 216.
 Soul prosperity, 255.
 Spared not the old world, 154.
 Speak evil of you as evildoers may
 be ashamed, 78.
 Speaking evil of dignities, 157,
 276.
 Spirit bearing witness, It is the,
 236.
 Spirit of Christ in the prophets, 17.
 Spirit of glory and of God resteth
 upon you, 102.
 Spirit testifying beforehand, 18.
 Spiritual house, A, 37.
 Spiritual sacrifices, Offering up, 38.
 Sporting themselves with their own
 deceivings, 160.
 Sprinkling of the blood of Jesus
 Christ, 8.
 Spots in your feasts of charity,
 279.
 Steps, Following in Christ's, 57.
 Stone disallowed by the builders,
 40, 41.
 Stone of stumbling and rock of
 offence, 42.
 Strangers and pilgrims, 46.
 Strangers scattered throughout
 Pontus, 6, 7.

INDEX.

Stripes, By whose, ye are healed, 61.
 Stumble at the word, 42.
 Suffer according to the will of God, 107.
 Suffer as a Christian, not be ashamed, 104, 105.
 Suffer not as a murderer or busy-body, 103, 104.
 Suffered in the flesh, Christ hath, 90.
 Suffering for righteousness' sake, 75.
 Suffering for well-doing, 79.
 Suffering wrongfully, 54.
 Sufferings of Christ, 18, 102.
 Swift destruction, 151

T.

Taking nothing of the Gentiles, 256.
 Tasted that the Lord is gracious, 35.
 Thankworthy, 54.
 The only wise God, 286.
 The truth's sake, dwelling in us, 248.
 These last times, 29.
 These three agree in one, 236.
 Things hard to be understood, 176.
 Things the angels desire to look into, 21.
 This is my beloved Son, 146.
 Three witnesses, The, 194.
 To Him be glory for ever and ever, 115.
 Transgression of the law, Sin the, 218.
 Trees whose fruit withereth, 280.
 True in Him and in you, Which thing is, 205.
 True light now shineth, 205.
 True God, and eternal life, 242.
 Try the spirits, 226.
 Twice dead, 280.

U.

Unction from the Holy One, 212.
 Unlearned and unstable men, 177.
 Unrighteousness is sin, All, 240.

Unspeakable, The word, 14.
 Unto you which believe He is precious, 40.
 Use hospitality, without grudging, 99

V.

Victory that overcometh the world, Our faith, 235.
 Virtue knowledge, Add to, 138.
 Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Charity, Brotherly Kindness, 137—139.
 Voice from the heavenly glory, 146.

W.

Walk as He walked, 204.
 Walking after the flesh, 157.
 Walking after their own lusts, 282.
 Walking in darkness, 200, 207.
 Walking in truth, 249.
 Wandering stars, 280.
 Way of truth evil spoken of, 152.
 We are of God, 228.
 We are of the truth, 224.
 We know our record is true, 258.
 We love Him because He first loved us, 232.
 Went out from us, 211.
 Wells without water, 162.
 What manner of persons ought ye to be, 173.
 What they know naturally, they corrupt themselves, 277.
 What shall the end be? 105.
 Whatsoever we ask we receive, 225.
 When He shall appear, 214.
 Who by Him do believe in God, 29.
 Who shall harm you? 75.
 Whose daughters ye are, 67.
 Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not, 218.
 Wife, the weaker vessel, 69.
 Will of the Gentiles, Wrought the, 92.
 Witness in Himself, Believer hath the, 237.
 Witness of God, The, 237.

INDEX.

Wives, Subjection of, to their husbands, 63.	Word of God, The living and abiding, 31.
Word from the beginning, The, 197.	World passeth away, and lust thereof, 210.
Word which by the Gospel is preached, 33.	Wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, 177.
World lieth in darkness, 241.	Write to you, little children, 207.

THE END.

La Verne College Library
La Verne, California

BS2777 .M3 1903

Bible. N.T. Catholic Epistles. English.
The epistles of St. Peter, St. John and

Bible. N.T. Catholic epistles. English.
The epistles of St. Peter, St. John and
Jude; with commentaries by the Rev. A. J.
... by the Rev. Alfred Plummer ... and b
Ven. W. M. Sinclair ... Edited by Charles
Ellicott ... London, Cassell, 1903.

307p. 18cm. (On cover: Ellicott's Bi
commentary)

"First edition, 1877"

I. Bible. N.T. Catholic epistles--Commentaries.
Arthur James, 1851-1928. II. Plummer, Alfred.
III. Sinclair, William Macdonald, 1850-1917.
IV. Title

334745

CCSC/ej

